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**The Role of American Political Culture in
The Development of the U.S.-Israel “Special Relationship” and
The Lost Opportunities for Achieving Middle East Peace**

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**The Role of American Political Culture in
The Development of the U.S.-Israel “Special Relationship” and
The Lost Opportunities for Achieving Middle East Peace**

by

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Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

December 2007

Dedication

To all of those who are working to bring Peace to the Middle East

&

To my parents for all of their love and support

Epigraph

In the execution of such a plan, nothing is more essential, than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular Nations, and passionate attachments for others, should be excluded; and that, in place of them, just and amicable feelings towards all should be cultivated. The Nation, which indulges towards another an habitual hatred, or an habitual fondness, is in some degree a slave. It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest. Antipathy in one nation against another disposes each more readily to offer insult and injury, to lay hold of slight causes of umbrage, and to be haughty and intractable, when accidental or trifling occasions of dispute occur. Hence frequent collisions, obstinate, envenomed, and bloody contests. The Nation, prompted by ill-will and resentment, sometimes impels to war the Government, contrary to the best calculations of policy. The Government sometimes participates in the national propensity, and adopts through passion what reason would reject; at other times, it makes the animosity of the nation subservient to projects of hostility instigated by pride, ambition, and other sinister and pernicious motives. The peace often, sometimes perhaps the liberty, of Nations has been the victim.

So likewise, a passionate attachment of one Nation for another produces a variety of evils. Sympathy for the favorite Nation, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest, in cases where no real common interest exists, and infusing into one the enmities of the other, betrays the former into a participation in the quarrels and wars of the latter, without adequate inducement or justification. It leads also to concessions to the favorite Nation of privileges denied to others, which is apt doubly to injure the Nation making the concessions; by unnecessarily parting with what ought to have been retained; and by exciting jealousy, ill-will, and a disposition to retaliate, in the parties from whom equal privileges are withheld. And it gives to ambitious, corrupted, or deluded citizens, (who devote themselves to the favorite nation,) facility to betray or sacrifice the interests of their own country, without odium, sometimes even with popularity; gilding, with the appearances of a virtuous sense of obligation, a commendable deference for public opinion, or a laudable zeal for public good, the base or foolish compliances of ambition, corruption, or infatuation.

As avenues to foreign influence in innumerable ways, such attachments are particularly alarming to the truly enlightened and independent Patriot. How many opportunities do they afford to tamper with domestic factions, to practise the arts of seduction, to mislead public opinion, to influence or awe the Public Councils! Such an attachment of a small or weak, towards a great and powerful nation, dooms the former to be the satellite of the latter.

Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence (I conjure you to believe me, fellow-citizens,) the jealousy of a free people ought to be constantly awake; since history and experience prove, that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of Republican Government. But that jealousy, to be useful, must be impartial; else it becomes the instrument of the very influence to be avoided, instead of a defence against it. Excessive partiality for one foreign nation, and excessive dislike of another, cause those whom they actuate to see danger only on one side, and serve to veil and even second the arts of influence on the other. Real patriots, who may resist the intrigues of the favorite, are liable to become suspected and odious; while its tools and dupes usurp the applause and confidence of the people, to surrender their interests.

-- from George Washington's Farewell Address, September 17, 1796

Preface

The United States and Israel have developed one of the most unique and unusual, and indeed “special” political alliances in modern history. This alliance that exists on many levels: political, military, economic, religious and cultural. This alliance is at the crux of American involvement in the Middle East and a cause of great concern throughout the Arab and Islamic world. It helps define America’s role in the world and Israel’s unique status in the Middle East. It is an alliance with broad bipartisan support, but one that is also widely criticized, because of the difficulties it creates for the United States.

While literally hundreds of books and articles have been written on this unique alliance, it remains in many ways a poorly understood phenomenon. Competing theories and explanations remain deeply tied to allegiances and opinions around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Many of them are more about efforts to influence American policy in the Middle East rather than to deconstruct and understand and explain its origins and continuity.

The following study is an attempt to separate myth from reality and to understand how it is that Americans view Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and how American perceptions and misperceptions of that reality have defined the contours of American foreign policy in the Middle East undermined the possibility of achieving a comprehensive peace settlement in between Israelis and Palestinians.

Acknowledgements

This project is the culmination of many years of work and the list of those that to be thanked is almost endless. I would like to thank all the faculty members at the College of William & Mary in Virginia and the University of Texas – Austin who have inspired me over the years. I would especially like to thank Dr. James Bill of the Department of Government who first inspired my interest and excitement about the study of the Middle East. I would like to thank my advisor at UT-Austin, Dr. Clement Henry for his support and patience. I would also like to thank Dr. Esther Raizen at UT-Austin for all of her assistance and particularly for careful editing of this work.

I would also like to express my thanks to many friends from my days at the College of William & Mary, the UT Department of Government, the UT Center for Middle East Studies, Texas Hillel, and Brit Tzedek v' Shalom (the Jewish Alliance for Justice and Peace) who have provided advice, ideas, critiques, friendship and counsel over many years. Finally, I would like to thank my parents for their support and confidence through these many years.

As a child, I used to do jigsaw puzzles with my mother. Later on I used to impress my classmates with my skills at solving the Rubik's Cube. Those skills have served me well since putting together the puzzle that is the U.S.-Israel "special relationship" has often been a process of putting together many pieces of a giant and complicated multi-dimensional puzzle. I hope that my efforts here have succeeded in putting together the many pieces of this puzzle in a way that creates a more complete picture than has previously been assembled.

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The “special relationship” between the United States and the State of Israel cannot be fully explained by conventional realist analysis of so-called “hard factors” such as strategic importance and economic; nor can it be fully explained using pluralist theory by the influence of the pro-Israel lobby. The U.S.-Israel relationship, which was initially established as a strategic partnership, has quietly metamorphosed into an alliance that while still nominally rationalized as a strategic has actually becoming deeply rooted in American politics and political culture.

In order to fully explain this unique alliance, which has shaped much of American foreign policy in the Middle East and most particularly American policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian peace process over the past several decades it is necessary to consider “soft factors” most especially cultural, historical, moral, political, and ideological components of the relationship. These often-overlooked factors contribute to a political culture which strengthens the alliance between the United States and Israel and further reinforces American values and identity. American strategic priorities in the Middle East are defined by a context of cultural intimacy that has been established between the two countries rather than Israel’s actual strategic value to the United States.

The result is that American policy in the Middle East has often been inconsistent with America’s publicly stated overall strategic goals. Often the alliance has ended up undermining goals like political and economic stability that it was originally intended to enhance. The political imperatives that often seem to govern American commitment to Israel are actually better explained as the results of deeply-rooted cultural and moral interpretations about Israel and its relationships with its neighbors. Thus it is the America’s constructed perceptions of the reality of Israel rather than the actual reality of the Middle East that defines the U.S. relationship with the Israel and the broader Middle East. This study is an attempt to analyze how mass political culture influences the ideas and values, and ultimately the actions, of the political elite, which have shaped American policy towards Israel and more broadly the entire Middle East.

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Introduction – Defining the Nature of the U.S.-Israel “Special Relationship”

“Many, even all relationships are special, George Orwell might have said, had *Animal Farm* been a foreign ministry. But some relationships are more special than others. Some relationships are born special, Shakespeare might have added, had *Twelfth Night* been a policy planning staff. But some achieve their specialness, while others have it thrust upon them”

The United States’ relationship with the State of Israel is different from every other foreign policy relationship that the United States has developed during past half-century. Two thoughtful observers commented that the U.S.-Israel relationship “has come to be one of the strongest, if strangest, in history.”² This “special relationship” is so unique that it requires a serious scholarly inquiry to explain. Recently, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt stirred great controversy in their critical examination of “The Israel Lobby” in which they said the U.S.-Israel alliance has become the “centerpiece of US Middle Eastern policy.” They added that “this situation has no equal in American political history.”³ Unfortunately, the vast majority of the research that has been conducted on this subject has been designed, either explicitly or implicitly, to serve as academic polemics in the Arab-Israeli conflict, rather than efforts to promote a serious academic discourse. The politicization of this academic discourse has obscured many of

¹ Schoenbaum, David. “Commentary: More Special than Others.” Diplomatic History. (Vol. 22, No. 2, Spring, 1998): 274.

² Melman, Yossi & Dan Raviv. Friends in Deeds: Inside the U.S.-Israel Alliance. (New York: Hyperion, 1994): xiv

³ Mearsheimer, John and Stephen Walt. “The Israel Lobby.” London Review of Books. (Vol. 28, No. 6, March 23, 2006)

the serious issues surrounding American foreign policymaking in the Middle East, which is often left to drift amidst the political crossfire.

Since 1970, and especially since 1980, the United States has maintained a practically unprecedented patron-client relationship with the State of Israel.⁴ David Schoenbaum notes that it is, “hard to think of many cases where relations between a very big, powerful and ambivalent patron, and a very small, dependent, but resourceful and resolute client have left equivalent marks on the region, and even the world.”⁵ American decision-making in the region has often been based on the implicit (and sometimes explicit) assumption of a near-total convergence of American and Israeli national interests. This assumption, which has been especially strong under the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations,⁶ is more of a convenient political construction than a strategic reality. This implicit assumption has become a type of political gospel with the rise of the foreign policy neo-conservatives as the dominant force in American foreign policy during the Bush/Cheney administration. In other words, American policy in the region often seems to operate on the presumption that positions taken by the government

⁴ This study is focusing solely on the patron (the U.S.) rather than the client (Israel). While there is a complicated debate about Israel’s goals around the peace process, there seems to be little debate about Israel’s goals in seeking a close and supportive economic, military, and diplomatic relationship with the United States in order to strengthen its security vis-à-vis its various regional adversaries.

⁵ Schoenbaum, David. “Commentary: More Special than Others.” Diplomatic History. (Volume 22, Number 2, Spring 1988): 280.

⁶ This study will refer to the 41st President, who served from 1989 to 1993, as George H.W. Bush and the 43rd President, who has been serving since 2001, as George W. Bush.

of Israel are automatically in the best interest of the United States. In colloquial terms, it appears to be a case of the Israeli tail wagging the American dog. The current administration has in many ways fallen into all of the entanglements of “passionate attachments” that George Washington warned against during in his above-cited Farewell Address in 1796.

Since the term “special relationship”-- which was first used to describe the Anglo-American relationship after 1940 -- has become rather ambiguous in both its political and academic usages, it is necessary to define why so many observers view this relationship as unique, if not unprecedented in the history of American foreign policy. In order to do this it is useful to turn to a description of the alliance written just before the end of the Cold War. Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov writes that:

The special relationship thesis generally maintains that the United States and Israel have a unique and unparalleled partnership, with high levels of friendship, amity, trust, and political and military cooperation. Each side occupies a special position in the other’s domestic and foreign policies. The relationship is not limited to decision makers but also involves the two societies, which ensures its endurance in times of conflict.... the U.S.-Israeli relationship became “special,” different from what is common between two states, especially a superpower and a small state in a patron-client relationship. It became, in other words, a *special patron-client relationship*, characterized by common political, ideological, security, and strategic interests, that is, a *community of strategic interests*; common values and ideals, that is, a *community of values*; an informal political and military alliance; and reciprocal relations, that is routine exchanges of tangible and intangible goods and services and shared perceptions of what was mutually beneficial.⁷

⁷ Bar-Siman-Tov, Yaacov. “The United States and Israel since 1948: A “Special Relationship”?” Diplomatic History (Volume 22, Number 2, Spring 1988): 231-232. Italics original.

Far more succinctly and eloquently, Winston Churchill described the aforementioned Anglo-American relationship in terms that are perhaps even more applicable to the U.S.-Israel relationship; Churchill eloquently summarized that the two parties to a special relationship had “faith in each other’s purpose, hope in each other’s future, and charity towards each other’s shortcomings.”⁸ There is little doubt that is this sort of relationship that has evolved between the United States and Israel.

Israel is the largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid -- roughly \$3 billion per year with some variations.⁹ U.S. foreign aid to Israel between 1949-2005 totals just over \$96 billion.¹⁰ If this is adjusted for inflation, the figure comes to approximately \$187 billion in 2007 dollars.¹¹ (See Appendix A and accompanying graphic below.) By one accounting

⁸ Reich, Bernard. Securing the Covenant: United States-Israel Relations After the Cold War. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995): 3. Reich also applies this quote to the U.S.-Israel relationship.

⁹ Egypt is the second largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid. In a sense, the high level of U.S. aid to Egypt is also an indirect result of the “special relationship” with Israel. Large scale aid to Israel began after the U.S.-negotiated Camp David Accords in 1979. The U.S. provides aid to Egypt in large part to help keep Egypt at peace with Israel.

¹⁰ Curtiss, Richard. “The Subject No One Mentions.” The Link. (Volume 30, Issue 4, January, 1998): 3. Curtiss’s figures are taken from a report by the Congressional Research Service. Aruri, Naseer. The Obstruction of Peace: The United States, Israel, and the Palestinians. (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1995): 85. Aruri’s figures are slightly different; he offers a figure of \$79 billion for the years 1949-1995. Mark, Clyde R. Israel: US Foreign Assistance, Congressional Research Service, Updated April 26, 2005

¹¹ Subsequent research indicated that the US Agency for International Development pegged the total in constant 2005 dollars from 1946 to 2005 at \$154 billion. Presumably USAID was using a different method to calculate inflation than that used by

USAID website estimates that Israel received about \$94 billion of \$677 billion -- roughly 14% -- of all the foreign aid distributed by the United States between 1946 and 2005. In both aid dollars and especially in per capita terms, this is far higher than any other foreign aid recipient. Israel receives large amounts of U.S. foreign aid despite the fact that it can no longer be defined as developing country like practically every other recipient of American foreign aid. Furthermore, whereas other recipients of U.S. economic aid have a large contingent of U.S. personnel assigned to them to supervise the distribution of the aid, there is no such presence in Israel. Israel actually supervises its own foreign aid.¹² Israel's foreign aid package is so politically secure, that there is no constituency in Congress for reducing it. Rather the task fell to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to propose to the U.S. Congress that they adopt a proposal that would

Federal Reserve which has been applied in Appendix A. USAID figures can be obtained from the constant and historical dollar calculations for Israel from <http://gesdb.usaid.gov/gbk/>. Incidentally the figure for U.S. government aid to the West Bank/Gaza Strip from 1946-2005 is roughly \$1.65 billion in constant 2005 dollars (Source: USAID website). Also in constant dollars, USAID's website indicates that Israel's \$154 billion is almost half (47%) of the \$327 billion in aid the U.S. has provided to the entire Middle East from 1946 to 2005. Of the \$173 billion in aid going to other Middle East countries, \$93 billion (28% of the total) has gone to Egypt -- mostly since 1979 Camp David Accords. Another \$20 billion (6% of the total) has gone to Iraq -- almost all of that since the 2002 American invasion. Another 5% of the total -- \$16 billion -- has gone to Jordan. Another 11.6 billion (4%) went to Iran -- mostly under the Shah. Israel's \$154 billion is about 9.4% of \$1.65 trillion dollars in all U.S. foreign aid between from 1946 to 2005. By comparison, the U.S. spent only \$119 billion on foreign aid to all of Latin America during the same period or roughly equivalent to the \$152 billion spent by the United States to rebuild Europe under the Marshall Plan from 1949 to 1952.

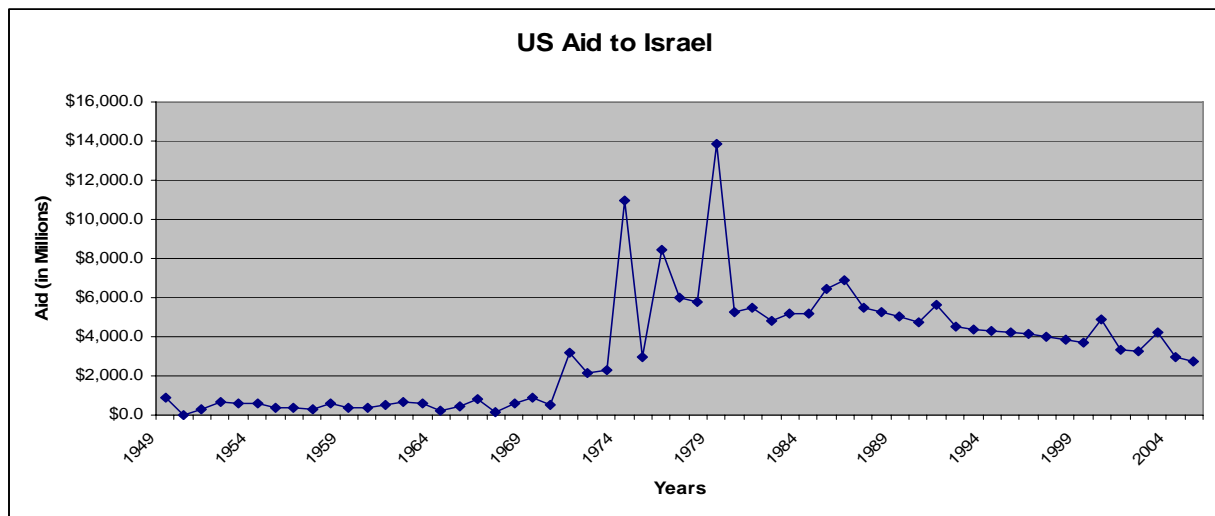
¹² This was noted by the author during a summer 1994 internship in the Inspector General's Office of the U.S. Agency for International Development. It's also worth nothing that much of the military aid used to buy US weapons systems.

gradually wean Israel from American economic aid while partially compensating for it through an increase in military aid. Speaking to a joint session of U.S. Congress in 1996, Netanyahu explained to the members of Congress that though Israel was very grateful to the U.S. for its generosity that it had now grown up and no longer required quite so much assistance from the United States Congress:

Finally, permit me briefly to remark on our future economic relationship. The United States has given Israel -- how can I tell it to this body? The United States has given Israel, apart from political and military support, munificent and magnificent assistance in the economic sphere. With America's help, Israel has grown to be a powerful, modern state. I believe that we can now say that Israel has reached childhood's end, that it has matured enough to begin approaching a state of self-reliance....We are deeply grateful for all we have received from the United States, for all that we have received from this chamber, from this body. But I believe there can be no greater tribute to America's long-standing economic aid to Israel than for us to be able to say: We are going to achieve economic independence. We are going to do it. In the next four years, we will begin the long-term process of gradually reducing the level of your generous economic assistance to Israel. I am convinced that our economic policies will lay the foundation for total self-reliance and great economic strength.¹³

¹³

Address to Joint Session of the United States Congress, July 10, 1996.
[gopher://israel-info.gov.il/00/speech/sta/960710n.sta%09%09%2B](http://israel-info.gov.il/00/speech/sta/960710n.sta%09%09%2B)



14

In actuality, while the promised reductions in Israel's standard foreign aid have taken place, the primary aid package has been enhanced by a supplemental aid packages including over a billion dollars to support implementation of the U.S.-brokered 1998 Wye River Agreement. There is a great likelihood that a final Israeli-Palestinian peace deal would result in an additional multi-billion dollar supplemental aid package as happened with the Camp David Accords and the Wye Agreement. Over the past decade, the level of economic aid to Israel has dropped while the level of military aid has been increased by about half of the decrease in economic aid. The process is leading to the phasing out of the economic aid component.

¹⁴ Supporting data for the above chart is drawn from Jeremy Sharp, "U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel," Congressional Research Service, Updated January 5, 2006. The detailed data supporting this chart is contained in Appendix A. <http://digital.library.unt.edu/govdocs/crs/permalink/meta-crs-8124:1>. Inflation Adjustment based on Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis to 2007 dollars <http://woodrow.mpls.frb.fed.us/Research/data/us/calc/index.cfm>

Israel also continues to be the beneficiary of nearly unprecedented military and intelligence cooperation, as well as hi-tech weapon sales designed to maintain Israel's "qualitative edge" over its adversaries. Few, if any, other countries have been able to buy so many sophisticated U.S. weapons systems.

One area where the United States has expressed a great deal of "charity towards... [Israel's] shortcomings" is the issue of proliferation of non-conventional weapons. With most other countries, the United States has followed a strict policy of encouraging non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The U.S. claimed that its invasion of Iraq in 2003 was because of its belief that Iraq was developing WMD. The current administration has supported sanctions against Iran, because of the fears of Iranian nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. In mid-1998, the U.S. imposed sanctions on India and Pakistan when they exploded nuclear weapons. The U.S. has harshly criticized Chinese and North Korean efforts to export nuclear technology to unfriendly states in the region.

Indeed, in the early days of the relationship before it became "special," Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson all attempted to pressure Israel not to "go nuclear." One of the reasons that Kennedy and Johnson approved weapons sales to Israel was to provide the Israelis with enough of a conventional deterrent so that it would stop their pursuit of nuclear weapons. And yet, the U.S. now seems to have a "special" policy towards Israeli nuclear proliferation. The U.S. appears to have adopted a "don't ask, don't tell" policy towards Israel's development of a large, although always officially

unacknowledged, nuclear program.¹⁵ Avner Cohen describes how Israel has been able to maintain a policy of “nuclear opacity;” by opacity, Cohen means that Israel’s nuclear policy is “shrouded in secrecy, officially unacknowledged, and insulated from domestic Israeli politics.”¹⁶ Over the last 35 years, there has been little or no pressure by the United States to restrict Israel’s nuclear development or to encourage it to become part of the nuclear non-proliferation regime in part, because the policy remains in the peculiar limbo of an unofficially unacknowledged open secret. On a related note, the United States rarely questions Israeli efforts to export sensitive technology to states that are unfriendly to the United States.¹⁷

While there have been ups and downs in the relationship, the United States has repeatedly defended Israel’s interests, both diplomatically and militarily, when its security has been threatened. The relationship has a certain elasticity that allows it to overcome difficult times. Bernard Reich has argued that:

Endurance and resilience are trademarks of this special relationship, the hallmark of which is the ability to endure crises in which the parties have conflicting interests. There are often are periods of coolness and discord

¹⁵ Hersh, Seymour M. The Sampson Option Israel’s Nuclear Arsenal and American Foreign Policy. (New York: Random House, 1991). Also see Reich: 55-58.

¹⁶ Cohen, Avner. Israel and the Bomb. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998): 1. Cohen’s book provides a comprehensive political history of the development of Israel’s nuclear opacity from 1950 to 1970.

¹⁷ A controversy in early 2000 over the sale of sophisticated Israeli radar to the People’s Republic of China was notable because it was so unusual in the history of U.S.-Israeli relations. The sale was canceled in mid-July 2000 after strong objections by the U.S. Congress and during the early stages of the 2nd Camp David Summit.

on specific issues, but because of the relationship's fundamentals the United States and Israel come together again for mutual advantage. In this sense, the United States and Israel have a familial linkage -- it is intimate and intense, and each is involved in the affairs of the other.¹⁸

The most dramatic such cases were the U.S. airlift during the Yom Kippur War in 1973 and the dispatching of American Patriot Missile crews to defend Israel from Iraqi scuds during the 1991 Gulf War. While a mutual defense treaty has never been signed in order to formalize the "special relationship," it has long been understood that America is committed to Israel's security and defense. There are numerous Memorandums of Understanding that have been signed that codify U.S.-Israeli cooperation in a slightly less formal sense. These policies have been maintained by half-dozen U.S. administrations dating back more than three decades.

This "special" standard is typical of many U.S. policies towards Israel, which has been typified by an unusual policy compartmentalization. There are numerous areas where Israeli actions -- particularly as they concern the on-going Middle East peace process -- have explicitly contradicted U.S. policy goals. Besides the aforementioned American nuclear double standard, since 1967, the U.S. has often disagreed with Israeli policies regarding Israeli policies in the Occupied Territories on such issues as settlement expansion, the status of Jerusalem, and violations of the rights of Palestinians. Ever since 1967, the U.S. has -- under most administration to one degree or another -- actively promoted a process of Arab-Israeli reconciliation and compromise within the framework

¹⁸ Reich, Bernard. Securing the Covenant: United States-Israeli Relations after the Cold War. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995): 4.

of United Nations Resolutions 242, and often over the strong objections of numerous Israeli governments -- more stridently so under right-wing Israeli governments. Despite these very significant disagreements in this central regional conflict in which Israel has acted often against U.S. priorities in the region, there are very few cases, especially under the last two administrations, in which the U.S. has used any of its numerous sanctions or levers to pressure Israel to conform to American policy goals. Thus Israel is rewarded for its strategic cooperation and assistance of the U.S., but it rarely receives more than a mild public rebuke -- if that -- when it acts against explicit and well-known American strategic priorities in the Middle East. The question as to why this peculiar compartmentalization of U.S. policy has taken place will be one that this study will attempt to address. The U.S. initially defined Israel as a strategic asset that could be utilized in order to assist the U.S. in achieving its goals of containing communism; in the post-Cold War era, protecting Israel has become an end, in and of itself, rather than a means to achieving an end. Thus the alliance is insulated from the pressure of helping the U.S. achieve its other current strategic goals such as maintain economic stability and advancing the fight against Islamic fundamentalism in the Global War on Terrorism. In effect, the alliance with Israel often ends up being a net burden that undermines efforts to achieve those goals. The chart on the next page summarizes the process of compartmentalization that has occurred in the definition of U.S. strategic goals since the end of the Cold War. This information on this chart will be explored more as this study progresses.

In recent decades, U.S. support for Israel has become increasingly bipartisan as the two major political parties vie to prove which is the most “pro-Israel.” Indeed, as will

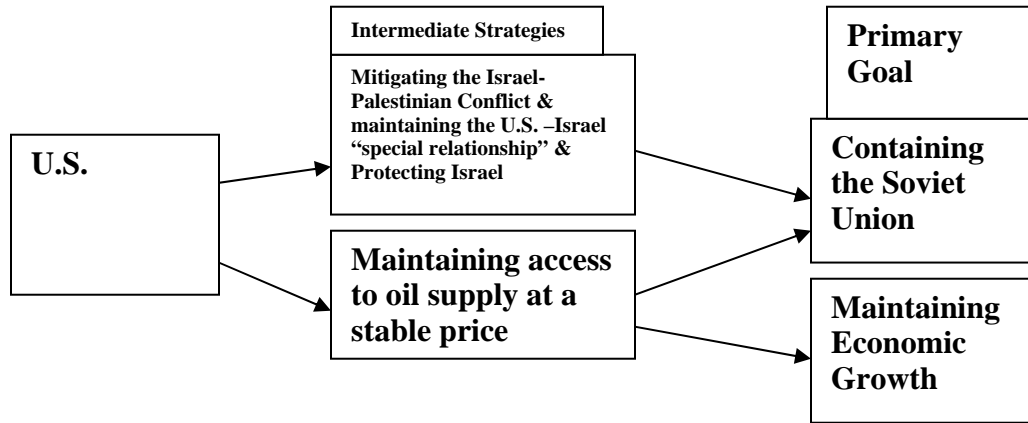
be discussed in Chapter 6, it is often difficult to distinguish between the Democratic and Republican Party platform planks on Israel. Some of the recent statements by leaders of the two parties should demonstrate how unique and truly unprecedented this relationship has become. In 1994, President Clinton succinctly and quite remarkably explained in a speech to the Israeli *Knesset* that “the survival of Israel is important not only to our interests, but to *every single value we hold dear as a people*”¹⁹ At the 1997 American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) conference, Vice-President Al Gore explained U.S. policy towards Israel in the following unambiguous terms:

Simply put, we will *never* permit anyone to drive a wedge between the United States and Israel. Our commitment to Israel’s security will be as *unshakable* now as it has been in the past. This commitment is *ironclad and unequivocal*. It rests on a strong moral and strategic foundation. It is based on shared values and on our *unwavering commitment* to democracy. Above all, let me assert my *unshakable belief* that this unique relationship is good for the United States of America. We will never depart from this path.²⁰

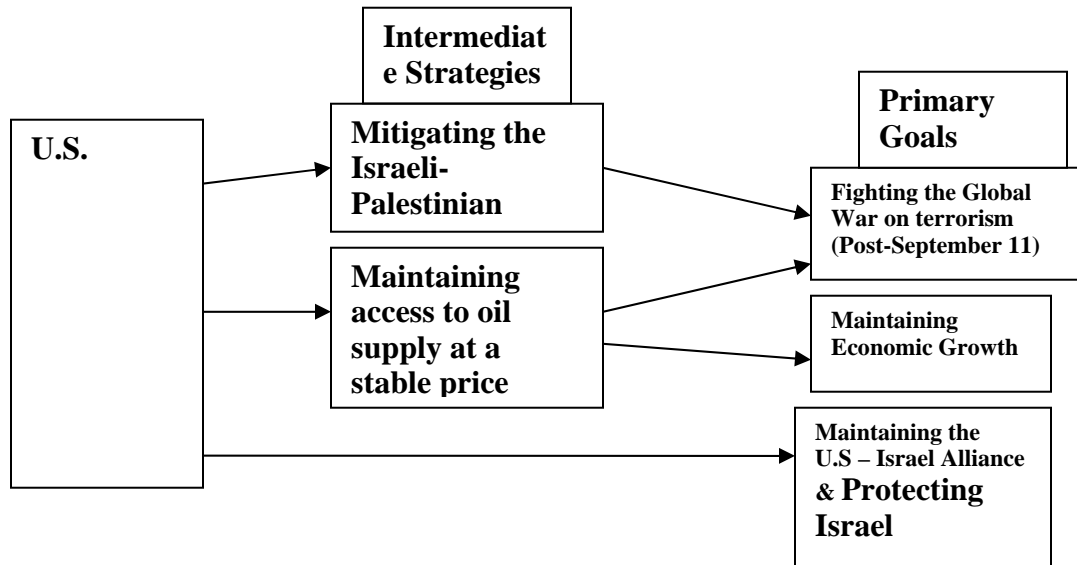
¹⁹ Reich, Bernard. . Securing the Covenant (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995): vii. President Bill Clinton speaking to the Israeli Knesset, October 27, 1994. Italics added for emphasis.

²⁰ AIPAC Policy Conference, Washington, D.C. April 6, 1997. Italics added by author for emphasis. <http://www.aipac.org/policy/transcripts/gore.htm>.

U.S. Strategic Goals in the Middle East during the Cold War (post-1970)



U.S. Strategic Goals in the Middle East during the Post-Cold War



At the 1998 AIPAC convention, Gore -- who was preparing the groundwork for his 2000 Presidential run -- may have strengthened the administration's rhetorical commitment to Israel even further -- if such a thing is possible. This speech was part of an effort by the administration to repair its relationship with the Israel after the administration's failed attempt to pressure the hard line government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to make additional concessions to the Palestinians.²¹ Vice-President Gore clearly signaled below that the administration was giving up its unsuccessful public effort to exert serious pressure on the Israeli government. Gore begins by reflecting on Israel's recent jubilee:

On that auspicious day [May 14, 1948] was born not only one of the most enduring nations in history but also *the most enduring friendship between nations in history*. Our admiration for Israel has never been stronger, our friendship with Israel has never been deeper, *America stands by Israel now and forever*. Our special relationship with Israel is *unshakable, it is ironclad, eternal and absolute*. It does not depend on the peace process, it transcends the peace process.... Don't you even think for one minute that any differences about this or that between the governments of the United States and Israel belie the slightest weakening in our underlying unity of purpose or will shake our relationship in any way, shape or form. Our commitment to the security of Israel is *unconditional and this administration is acting decisively to meet that commitment....* The United

²¹ This also came shortly after Hillary Clinton's public endorsement of a Palestinian state. While the President did not officially endorse her position, the underlying intent and direction was quite clear to most Israelis and Israeli policy-makers. Mrs. Clinton has become much more supportive of Israeli since she entered the U.S. Senate race in heavily Jewish New York state. This pattern has continued during her Senate career and her Presidential run.

States has *an absolute, uncompromising commitment to Israel's security* and an absolute conviction that Israel alone must decide the steps necessary to ensure that security. That is Israel's prerogative. We accept that. We endorse that. Whatever Israel decides [about the further redeployments from the West Bank] cannot, *will not, will never, not ever alter our fundamental commitment to her security.*²²

It is hard to imagine the U.S. government making such unequivocal, absolute security commitments to any other state or states -- including its NATO allies -- as the one that the Clinton administration makes to Israel above. The implication of Gore's "unconditional," "absolute," "eternal", "uncompromising," and "fundamental" commitment to Israel is that the Vice-President puts security of Israel ahead of the security of the United States and that he would be willing to undermine American national security for the sake of Israel. While this can be partially attributed to rhetorical excess on the Vice-President's part in speaking before the pro-Israel lobby, the emotional, passionate tone of his remarks is hard to completely dismiss as mere political rhetoric. His extraordinary statements are not at all unusual, or even particularly controversial, among those of leading American policy-makers. Regardless of whether it is a completely true statement of the position of the Clinton/Gore administration, it remains a truly extraordinary, and perhaps unprecedented, language in the rhetoric of American foreign policy.

²² <http://www.aipac.org/pc98/webcasts/gore0518.shtml>. Italics added by author for emphasis. Brackets added by the author for clarification. It is rather disingenuous for Gore to argue that the close U.S.-Israel friendship goes back to 1948 for this is not really the case as will be explained in chapter 4.

But the Vice-President is not the only leading Democrat to speak in such terms.

Then-Senate Minority leader Thomas Daschle (D-SD) noted in a speech that:

[That the creation of the state of Israel meant that] No longer were the Jewish people forced to wander the world unwanted. No longer would the Jewish people have to depend on anyone else for their security. America was committed to that principle 50 years ago, and it should be committed today. *Our commitment to Israel's security must never change....The bond of friendship that exists between us is deep and unbreakable. The United States has no better friend and no more important ally than Israel*²³

Daschle went on to develop the familial connection between the United States and Israel:

The relationship between the U.S. and Israeli government and the U.S. and Israeli people is so strong, he [Prime Minister Netanyahu] said, it's *like a family sitting around the dinner table*. And I think that's a good analogy....It must be acknowledged that there is *nothing on earth that will split this family*.²⁴

His colleague, House Minority leader Dick Gephardt (D-MO), explained the U.S.-Israel relationship in even more intimate and personal terms. Gephardt stated that:

I often tell I've been married now to Jane Gephardt for 32 years. We've had some occasional disagreements -- not very often. When we disagree, through the disagreement, we respect one another. I adore her. I will always adore her. That is the United States' relationship with Israel.²⁵

²³ AIPAC Policy Conference, Washington, D.C., May 19, 1998. <http://www.aipac.org/pc98/webcasts/dasc0519.shtml>. Italics added by author for emphasis.

²⁴ AIPAC Policy Conference, Washington, D.C., May 19, 1998. <http://www.aipac.org/pc98/webcasts/dasc0519.shtml>. Italics added by author for emphasis. Brackets added by author for clarification.

²⁵ AIPAC Policy Conference, Washington, D.C., May 19, 1998. <http://www.aipac.org/pc98/webcasts/geph0519.shtml>. One can't help wonder what Mrs. Gephardt thought of having her marriage compared to U.S. foreign policy?

While the Democratic Party has traditionally been the strongly pro-Israel, they no longer hold a monopoly in this area since it is not only Democrats that express undying support for Israel. Both Daschle and Gephardt, as leaders of the minority party, took the unusual step (in those same speeches) of emphasizing in their speeches that support for Israel on Capitol Hill was strongly bipartisan.

Then-Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-MS) shared very similar sentiments. For Senator Lott, Israelis were his “brothers” and “kindred spirits.” He noted that:

We [the United States and Israel] are *kindred spirits together*. This is important not just for Israel; it’s important for America. It’s important for free men and women all over this world. *Israel is our strongest strategic ally* but also they are *our kindred spirit and brothers*. So this is an important relationship, one that we cherish, one that we will not forget....Shalom, ya’ll.²⁶

Then-Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich (R-GA), speaking at the 1997 AIPAC convention, tried to one-up Vice-President Gore by criticizing the Clinton Administration -- by practically all accounts, one of the most pro-Israel administrations in history -- for not being pro-Israel enough. The Speaker sharply criticized a relatively minor Administration effort to pressure Israel to pursue the peace process. Speaker Gingrich stated that we must

...Never allow a wedge to be driven between the United States and Israel.... We should never allow a wedge to be driven between the two democracies. And we certainly should not allow that wedge to be driven by those who condone and sustain terrorism. Now, I was very

²⁶ AIPAC Policy Conference, Washington, D.C., May 19, 1998. <http://www.aipac.org/pc98/webcasts/lott0519.shtml>. Italics added by author for emphasis.

disappointed...that the United States would attend a conference convened by Yasser Arafat in March [1997] in Gaza, a conference that explicitly excluded Israel. I hope this administration will make clear that it will never again ever attend a one-sided, anti-Israeli conference to the exclusion of Israel. If Israel can't be in the room, why should America walk in and teach the Arab world that they don't need to deal with Israel?²⁷

Speaker Gingrich's 1998 remarks seemed to suggest that Israel needed to defend itself against the demands of the United States, or at least the Clinton administration. His argument, which seem remarkable coming from the third-ranking official in the U.S. government, seem to suggest that the United States, despite everything that it does to aid and support Israel, has no right to criticize it. Gingrich further noted that:

...Can you imagine the American reaction if an Israeli diplomat showed up and said -- You know, we've thought about it, and we have a better way to defend Texas than you do. And we've thought about it and we've decided how to redefine the Canadian-American border because we know it better than you do. When I see an American diplomat suggest to Israeli generals that our understanding of their security needs on the West Bank is better than their understanding, I'm looking at somebody who's been in fancy hotels too long and out of touch with reality.... *[Israel's] right of self-determination has to be defended at all costs, even against the best intentions of Israel's friends -- including the United States.*²⁸

Gingrich continued this line of argument on his May, 1998 visit to Israel. During this visit the Speaker Gingrich seriously considered participating in a ceremony to lay the cornerstone for the construction of the long-promised American embassy in Jerusalem --

²⁷ AIPAC Policy Conference, Washington, D.C., April 8, 1997.
<http://www.aipac.org/policy/transcripts/gingrich.htm>. Brackets added for clarification.
Italics added for emphasis.

²⁸ AIPAC Policy Conference, Washington, D.C., April 8, 1997.
<http://www.aipac.org/pc98/webcasts/ging0519.shtml>. Italics added for emphasis.
Brackets added for clarification.

an action that would have directly contradicted the policy of the Clinton administration.²⁹

The Speaker used this disagreement between the Legislative and Executive branches as an excuse to take the very unusual step of criticizing the President's foreign policy while abroad. The same type of disagreement was apparent in a set of letters from majorities of both houses of Congress in the spring of 1998, which criticized the Clinton administration's effort to pressure Israel into agreeing to redeployment out of a 13% of the West Bank. They advised the President to turn down the heat on Israel; the administration, as seen in the Vice-President's quote above, did just that. A bipartisan letter, co-authored by Senators Joseph Lieberman (D-CT) and Connie Mack (R-FL) and co-signed by 79 other Senators, advised the President Clinton that:

It would be a serious mistake for the United States to change from its traditional role as facilitator of the peace process to using public pressure against Israel.... America's commitment to Israel's security under girds the entire peace process and provides Israel the confidence it needs to take very real risks for peace. As you know, Secretary [of State William] Christopher made a written commitment that it would be up to Israel to decide the size and scope of further redeployments of Israeli forces on the

²⁹ Speaker Gingrich ultimately backed off from this idea at the urging of National Security Advisor Samuel Berger who feared that it might lead to violence. While Congress has approved construction of a new American embassy in Jerusalem, the President and the State Department (and most foreign governments) still recognize Tel Aviv, not Jerusalem, as Israel's capital. The Congress has conditioned full funding of the State Department on its transfer of the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem -- although the President was granted a national security waiver that he can use to block the move. The administration argues that such an action would undermine on-going negotiations over the final status of Jerusalem. Although, it should be noted that President Clinton promised to move the U.S. embassy while campaigning for the White House in 1992. In an interview on July 28, 2000 in the wake of the failure of Camp David II and in an attempt to assure the government of Israeli Prime Ehud Barak, President Clinton suggested that the U.S. might reassess this policy and consider moving the Embassy at a later date.

West Bank. Presenting an American plan C especially one that includes a specific redeployment figure beyond what Israel believes to be in its national security interest before final status arrangements -- runs counter to Secretary Christopher's commitment and can only undermine Israel's confidence.³⁰

The wording above suggests that the U.S. Senators were more concerned about Israel's "confidence" and Israel's "national security interest" than the Secretary of State's ability to engage in active diplomacy. Remarkably, this letter about U.S. foreign policy never mentions American national security or American interests in the Middle East.

In the post-9/11 Bush administration, the relationship has drawn even closer as the perceived common threat of international terrorism has created an even stronger bond between Israel and the Bush/Cheney administration. The neo-conservatives in the administration have viewed Israeli national interests as almost indistinguishable from American national interest and both houses in the U.S. Congress have repeatedly passed resolutions and authored letters to the President praising Israeli policies in lavish terms.

On an economic level, this alliance seems counterintuitive when one considers that the "special relationship" developed and strengthened during the very period that many of Israel's Arab adversaries were establishing a predominant economic position in the petroleum export market. Clearly, the United States has strong economic and strategic interests in maintaining friendly relations with the Arab states, which control the

³⁰ [Http://www.aipac.org/letter.shtml](http://www.aipac.org/letter.shtml). The quote above is reference to the "Note for the record" that Secretary of State Warren Christopher appended to the January 1997 Hebron accord. Brackets added by author for clarification.

economic lifeline of the industrialized world.³¹ While the U.S. has developed other sources of oil both domestically and outside the Middle East, there can be little doubt that both the U.S. and many of its European and Asian allies still rely heavily on the importation of oil from the Persian Gulf. So much so, that during the last two decades the United States has gone to war in the Persian Gulf twice in order to establishing political hegemony and to attempt to maintain economic stability in this key geo-strategically vital region. However, both the Clinton and George W. Bush Administrations have completely refused to even consider that Israeli policies -- primarily the Israeli Occupation of the Palestinian Territories -- are partially responsible for the widespread hostility to the United States in the Middle East. This would require acknowledging that American and Israeli interests may not be as synonymous as they have so often been asserted to be. The American political discourse seems to preclude the possibility of considering significance divergence in the interests of the two close allies. By contrast none of the other members of the Organization for Economic

³¹ It is not too early to begin to speculate -- albeit in a highly tentative manner -- how the economic transformations associated with global warming could potentially affect U.S. policy in the region. If global warming were to lead in coming decades to the successful development of alternatives to fossil fuels, than its quite possible that the industrialized world would become significantly less dependent on extracting petroleum from the Middle East. This could, conceivably, lead to a significant decrease in the demand for -- and therefore the price of oil. If petroleum becomes less important to the world economy than it is certainly a real possibility that oil-producing states will become less geo-strategically important to the industrialized world over the next several decades. Of course, such thinking is highly speculative and all sorts of alternative scenarios also exist.

Cooperation and Development (OECD) -- including Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and Japan -- have established and maintained such a close alliance with Israel.³²

Despite serious questions as to the wisdom and strategic benefit of U.S.-Israel alliance, public support for the State of Israel has remained consistently high in practically every poll conducted since Israel's founding in 1948. While there have been some dips in public support for Israel during periods when particularly disturbing Israeli actions were highly publicized,³³ these periods have been remarkably brief quickly returning to its original levels. Within a few weeks, public support for Israel always seems to return to its normally high levels. Eytan Gilboa has thoroughly researched the public opinion data through the mid-1980s and he concludes that:

General American feelings for Israel have remained consistently favorable since the inception of a Jewish state in 1948. Various polls, utilizing different methods and measurements, have revealed relatively high percentages of national samples stating that Israel is a close, strong, or reliable ally of the United States. This pattern has remained constant even in times of tension and disagreement between the two governments and during controversial events, such as the 1982 Israeli war in Lebanon.... [The graph of the sympathy index from 1947 to 1984] indicates that since the establishment of Israel, Americans have consistently sympathized more with Israel than with the Arabs.... Since 1967, however, the

³² Germany has a very unique relationship with Israel as would be expected given the historical experience of Jews during the Holocaust. See Feldman, Lily. The Special Relationship between West Germany and Israel. (Boston: George Allen & Unwin, 1984) and Lavy, George. Germany and Israel: Moral Debt and National Interest. (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1996).

³³ After Israel's Christian Phalangist Allies with apparent Israeli complicity massacred hundreds of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatilia refugee camps near Beirut in September 1982, the sympathy index which measures American sympathy for Israel dropped to its lowest levels ever. See Appendix B.

American public has regularly expressed more sympathy for Israel by a margin of at least four to one.³⁴ [See Appendix B for Gilboa's data chart on Feelings toward Israel, 1957 to 1983]

Gilboa further demonstrates that there is a remarkable degree of uniformity of belief about Israel across most of the usual cleavages. Surveys that control for race, education, occupation, income, gender, age, region, community-size, religion, and political orientation, produce some minor variations, but do not show a significantly weaker sympathy for Israel among any of these groups.³⁵ Gilboa writes that, "...consistently strong pro-Israeli sentiments were found among each stratum of American society."³⁶

A later study by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations seems to confirm that American attitudes have changed little in the decade since the Gilboa study. According to the Chicago Council's 1994 survey, 64% of the American public considered Israel to be a vital interest of the United States. A substantial segment of the American public,

³⁴ Gilboa, Eytan. American Public Opinion toward Israel and the Arab-Israeli Conflict. (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books / D.C. Heath Company, 1987): 306, 308. The table referred to in the quote is "Figure 9-1. American Sympathies for Israel and the Arab Nations, 1947-1984" and it appears on Gilboa: 310-311. Additional figures on the sympathy index can be found Table 1-5 (p. 26), Table 2-1 (p. 47), Table 3-2 (p. 90), and Table 4-1 (p.127) as well as numerous other tables in Gilboa well-documented study of public opinion. Brackets added for clarification.

³⁵ Gilboa. American Public Opinion: 271-304.

³⁶ Gilboa. American Public Opinion: 301.

42%, went as far as supporting the use of American troops “if Arab forces invaded Israel.”³⁷ Page and Shapiro argue that:

United States public opinion about the Middle East has followed a generally stable pattern of support for Israel but reluctance to get directly involved in conflict. Within this basic framework, opinions have changed somewhat in response to major events like wars and peacemaking attempts and the Palestinian uprising.³⁸

Appendix B includes hundreds of public opinion polls compiled by Mitchell Bard of the American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise and posted on the website of the Jewish Virtual Library. In the standard question of sympathy for Israel vs. sympathy for Arab states or the Palestinians, the results have remained remarkable consistent with support for Israel in mid-40s or low-50s and support for Arabs and Palestinians around 10%. A July 2006 poll by the Pew Center for the People and the Press taken around the time of Israel’s intervention in Gaza and the Israeli-Hezbollah War in Lebanon put support for Israel at 44% and support for the Palestinians at 9%. (Data from several hundred public opinion polls is contained in Appendix B.) In short, the American public’s support for Israel has been very high for over half a century and has remained so with remarkable consistency.

³⁷ Rielly, John E. (Editor) American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy 1995. (Chicago, IL: The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1995): 20, 26, 35. By means of comparison only 54% of that same public supported using American forces to protect Western Europe from an invasion by Russia.

³⁸ Page, Benjamin and Robert Shapiro. Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in American’s Policy Preferences. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992): 251. The chapters in their book on foreign policy are coauthored with John M. Gillroy.

Thus it is clear that the U.S. and Israel have established a very unusual patron-client relationship as measured by U.S. policy in the region, American political rhetoric, and American public opinion. Since this relationship is both unique and highly counterintuitive, it is not surprising that it will require a very unique explanation that accounts for the fact that this relationship “is not limited to decision makers but also involves the two societies.” While most international relationships seem to be squarely based on strategic factors, this one requires analysis of what Bar-Siman-Tov calls “hard” and “soft” factors. Bar-Siman-Tov, in his aforementioned article, goes on to speak of the “community of strategic factors” in the relationship as the “hard” factors and the “community of strategic values” as the “soft” factors in the special relationship. He argues that the relationship resulted from the “unique interplay of “soft” and “hard” factors”³⁹ While this analysis will substantially agree with much of Bar-Siman-Tov’s analysis and adopt his language of that analysis, it will argue that he, like most other scholars, substantially undervalues the role of the “soft” factors especially in terms of their role in shaping attitudes among policy elites. As we will see below, the language and approach of strategic analysis is unable to explain the remarkable continuity of the “special relationship” in the greatly changed strategic environment following the Arab Oil Embargo, the end of the Cold War, the First Gulf War, 9/11 attacks, and the U.S. Occupation of Iraq. Each of these events could have easily formed the basis for strategic

³⁹ Bar-Siman-Tov, Yaacov. “The United States and Israel since 1948: A “Special Relationship”?” Diplomatic History (Volume 22, Number 2, Spring 1988): 232.

decisions to weaken American ties to Israel, but they were ultimately reinterpreted as grounds for continuing and strengthening the U.S.-Israel alliance.

Chapter 1 explains and critiques out the two primary theories – U.S. strategic interest and interest-group liberalism – that are most often used to explain the U.S.-Israel “special relationship.” Chapter 2 proposes an alternative theory based on a political culture model. Chapter 3 elaborates that model and explores how recent cultural changes have strengthened the “special relationship” when many would have predicted that it would deteriorate. Chapter 4 analyzes the historical development of the alliance within the Executive Branch up through the end of the Cold War. Chapter 5 examines the alliance during the three Presidential administrations since the end of the Cold War. Chapter 6 considers the political development of the U.S.-Israel relationship through the lens of the Democratic and Republican Parties by analyzing the content of their Party platforms commitments around Israel. Chapter 7 considers the manner in which the alliance has been framed by the Jewish community operating primarily within the realm of the U.S. Congress. In the following model, Chapters 2 and 3 will attempt to explain the independent cultural variables. Chapters 4 and 5 describe the resulting dependent policy outcomes. And Chapters 6 and 7 offer an explanation of the role of the intervening political and cultural institutions -- particularly political parties (in Chapter 6) and the nexus between the Jewish community and Congress (in Chapter 7).

Chapter 1 – Standard Explanations of the U.S.-Israel Alliance

American policymaking elites have maintained, and indeed strengthened, the United States' "passionate attachment"⁴⁰ to the State of Israel for nearly four decades.⁴¹ Even after the Cold War, when the major shared threat to the United States and Israel disappeared, the relationship remained and even appears to have strengthened. These elites have generally defended it in terms of America's strategic interests in the region. This argument fits in with the standard realist paradigm of international relations, which argues that states develop their foreign policies based strictly on rational analysis of their strategic national interests. Morgenthauian realism⁴² assumes that "statesmen think and act in terms of interest defined as power."⁴³ In so doing, realism greatly underestimates the role that politics and culture play in shaping the political decision-making about the

⁴⁰ George W. Ball and Douglass B. Ball applied this phrase to the U.S.-Israel relationship in their book of the same title. Ball borrowed the phrase from George Washington's 1797 Farewell Address. Ball, George W. and Douglass B. Ball. The Passionate Attachment: America's Involvement with Israel, 1947 to Present. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992)

⁴¹ The focus here is on the last three decades or so and the "special relationship" is being dated from the period following the 1967 Arab-Israeli War and particularly after 1970. Some recent scholarship suggests that the beginnings of the "special relationship" can be traced back to the second Eisenhower Administration just after the 1956 Suez Crisis. See Ben-Zvi, Abraham. Decade of Transition: Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the Origins of the American-Israeli Alliance. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998)

⁴² Consult Hans J. Morgenthau and Kenneth W. Thompson's Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Peace and Power (6th Edition) (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985) for the meaning of this term, particularly chapter 1 - "A Realist Theory of International Politics."

⁴³ Morgenthau and Thompson: 5.

Middle East. Measured strictly in terms of strategic interest, U.S. policy towards the Middle East in general, and Israel in particular, has often been highly irrational. In reality, decisions to defend Israel's interests appear to be almost irrational acts of either courage or folly, depending on one's perspective. Thus the perplexing question that this project will attempt to answer is: Why did American policy elites establish, and why have they continued to maintain, America's "special relationship" with Israel as a central organizing principle of U.S. foreign policy in Middle East -- often in spite of America's strategic interests in the region?

To begin with, in order to discuss U.S. strategic interests in the Middle East, it is necessary to define them. While there are innumerable nuances and complexities to this subject, there is also a fair amount of consistency to the U.S. goals within the broad context of the period of Cold War (roughly from 1948 to 1989). It is well-established that the overall U.S. strategy during the Cold War was containment of the Soviet Union. Within this context, Ben-Zvi concisely summarizes these goals as "the desire to mitigate (or, at the very least, stabilize) the Arab-Israeli conflict; the wish to maintain political and economic access to Arab oil; and the quest to increase American influence in the area at the expense of the Soviet Union (but without risking a direct superpower confrontation)."⁴⁴ It is reasonable to assume that the third reason expired with the Cold War, but that the first two remain valid. While mitigation of the Arab-Israeli conflict and

⁴⁴ Ben-Zvi, Abraham. Decade of Transition: Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the Origins of the American-Israeli Alliance. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998) Ben-Zvi is speaking in the context of the 1950s and early 1960s here, but the description seems to aptly describe the entire Cold War period.

access to Arab oil were once seen as means for containing the Soviet Union, they remain valid strategic goals in the Post-Cold War era although they are now primarily means for maintaining the stability of the global economy. Since the September 11th attacks, the fight against terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism has been emerged as the primary goal of U.S. foreign policy. In the context of the “Global War on Terror,” the goal mitigating the Arab-Israeli conflict has taken on additional strategic value as a means addressing the anger and frustration that fuels the threat of Islamic terrorism.

The Strategic Interest Approach. Many of the advocates of the U.S.-Israel relationship have argued that the primary explanation of the “special relationship” is a product of a mutually beneficial strategic situation in which Israel as the only democracy in the Middle East serves U.S. strategic goals in the region. While it is obvious that a relationship with the world’s strongest -- and by the 1990s only -- superpower is beneficial to Israel, the strategic value thesis does not fully explain the ongoing American commitment to the State of Israel. Nor can it account for the considerable evidence that Israel has often been a strategic burden to the pursuit of U.S. interests in the region.⁴⁵

Although the strategic interest approach is mostly the territory of supporters of Israel, it is also the method of some of its most severe critics. Ironically, these two radically different schools of thought see Israel as a strategic asset. While they have a similar assessment of Israel’s strategic value to the conduct of U.S. foreign policy, they

⁴⁵ Mansour, Camille. Beyond Alliance: Israel in U.S. Foreign Policy. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994). On this subject see Chapter 2, “A Doctrine of Israel as a Burden?”

have radically different views of the underlying motivations of U.S. foreign policy. The argument that Israel is a strategic asset to the United States is most closely associated with defenders of the “special relationship” (most obviously the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, AIPAC’s Washington think tank); however, very similar arguments are also used by a school of critics of U.S. Middle East policy -- most prominently MIT linguist Noam Chomsky.

The defenders of the “special relationship” view the goals of U.S. foreign policy in fairly benign terms and thus believe that Israel being a strategic asset of the United States is a positive and constructive phenomenon for the advancement of democracy and peace for both countries and the world. Chomsky and his allies have a much more insidious view of American foreign policy. They view American foreign policy as essential exploitative and neo-colonial/imperial phenomenon. Thus Israel’s position as a strategic asset of the United States undermines rather than advances the process of making peace and expanding democracy in the world. While the essential evaluation that Israel is a strategic asset is the same, Chomsky emphasizes different, and generally more insidious, aspects of the “special relationship.” Chomsky states that the Israel is a valuable strategic asset for defending the Arabian oil supply. He also argues that:

From the late 1950s...the U.S. government increasingly came to accept the Israel thesis that a powerful Israel is a “strategic asset” for the United States, serving as a barrier against indigenous radical nationalist threats to American interests, which might gain support from the USSR....Israel aided the U.S. in penetrating Black Africa with substantial secret CIA subsidies -- supporting Haile Selassie in Ethiopia, Idi Amin in Uganda, Mobutu in Zaire, Bokassa in the Central Africa Republic, and others at various times -- as well as in circumventing the ban on aid to Rhodesia

and South Africa, and more recently, in providing military and technological aid, as well as many advisers, for U.S. clients in Central America. An increasingly visible alliance between Israel, South Africa, Taiwan and the military dictatorships of the southern cone in South America has proven an attractive prospect for major segments of American power. Now, Israel is surely regarded as a crucial part of the elaborate U.S. base and backup system for the Rapid Deployment Force ringing the Middle East oil producing region...the primary U.S. interest in the Middle East region...is to maintain control over its energy reserves and the flow of petrodollars.....Israel's military might enhances the capacity of the United States to rule the region by force and violence.....⁴⁶

Most of the strategic benefits that Chomsky attributes to Israel are not benefits that are inherent or specific to Israel as much as they are incidental roles that could have been attained through any number of U.S. client states. Like the defenders of the "special relationship," the Chomsky school rarely discusses the strategic liabilities created by the U.S.-Israel alliance or the problems that it poses to securing the Middle Eastern oil supply.

Nor do the economic benefits of the U.S.-Israel relationship explain the compartmentalization -- separation of the maintenance of the U.S.-Israel alliance from the broader American strategic interests in the region -- of American policy towards Israel. Despite its high-technology boom and its 1986 Free Trade Treaty with the United States, is far too small to provide a market large enough to justify the compartmentalization of U.S. strategic priorities. Economically speaking, this alliance appears even more inexplicable than it does strategically. As noted above, the United States government has given the State of Israel billions of dollars in economic and

⁴⁶ Chomsky, Noam. The Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel, and the Palestinians (Boston: South End Press, 1983): 20, 21-22, 23.

military assistance over the past half-century. In addition to the cost of foreign aid to Israel, one leading former policymaker contends that the United States lost billions of dollars in arms sales due to its alliance with Israel. Former Undersecretary of State George Ball, an outspoken critic of U.S. policy towards Israel, asserts that America's alliance with Israel cost the U.S. \$70 billion in arms sales to Saudi Arabia in the late 1980s.⁴⁷ Moreover, many policymakers have argued that the "special relationship" has endangered America's ability to purchase inexpensive oil from Israel's Arab adversaries and has undermined western efforts to achieve political hegemony in the region. The U.S. alliance with Israel has clearly stoked the flames of anti-Western/anti-American variants of both Arab nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism since most of the Islamic world views Israel as a Western colonial intrusion into the Arab and Islamic worlds.

From the very beginning, many policy-makers in the United States viewed Israel as a liability for U.S. interests in the region. In 1948, then-Secretary of State George Marshall and his key advisors at the State Department advised President Truman not to recognize the new Israeli state so as not to anger the Arab oil producers. This issue, of course, rose to crisis proportions at the time of the 1973-74 Arab oil embargo when the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) raised the price of oil and reduced exports to the United States, because of U.S. support for Israel in the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Robert Kaplan seemed to capture the issue when he summarized the cynical

⁴⁷ Ball, George and Douglass Ball. The Passionate Attachment: 272-278, 282. The Balls' claim seems to be inherently difficult to prove and is poorly documented. He doesn't indicate whether there were any counterbalancing arms sales to Israel during the same period.

economic logic of many State Department analysts as: “How many oil wells do the Jews have?”⁴⁸

The realist explanation of these events is that during the late Cold War Israel’s strategic value to the United States outweighed its intransigence in the peace process and thus resulted in these two realms being compartmentalized. Steven Spiegel argued in 1983 that Israel provided a number of important, but less visible, strategic benefits for the United States. Spiegel writes that:

...Israel has often served as a silent partner in the American role in the area [the Middle East].... Israel today is a significant enough military power to act as a deterrent against Soviet plans for invasion of the Persian Gulf or for activities in the Mediterranean.... Israel...is in essence testing American equipment under combat conditions against Soviet arms, and it is Israel which is developing the technical innovations and tactics to deal with new challenges posed by the latest Soviet weaponry.... Israeli research-and-development procedures are quicker and cheaper than in the United States...⁴⁹

In the post-Cold War context, Gerald Steinberg has tried to explain continuation of the relationship in terms of institutionalization and growth of Israeli burden sharing. Steinberg wrote in 1998:

⁴⁸ Kaplan, Robert. The Arabists: 95. Kaplan uses this phrase to describe what he imagines to be the thinking of one of the leading State Department Arabists, Loy Henderson. Kaplan considers Henderson to be typical of a generation of Arabists who dominated the thinking of the U.S. State Department for decades.

⁴⁹ Spiegel, Steven, “Israel as a Strategic Asset:” 337-341. Spiegel is referring primarily to Israel’s use of American weapons against Soviet-supplied Syrian weapons during the 1982 Lebanon War. See also Mordechai Nisan’s American Middle East Foreign Policy: A Political Reevaluation (1982) and Steven Rosen’s The Strategic Value of Israel (1982).

The available evidence indicates that the overall strategic relationship, characterized by weapons and technology deliveries, meetings of various joint groups, such as the JPMG [joint political-military working group], and other cooperative activities, was not affected. Similarly, more recent tension with the United States over Israeli policies with respect to the negotiations with the Palestinians, settlements, etc. have also apparently not had an impact on the strategic relationship....The degree of Israeli reciprocity and the contributions in the context of this alliance relationship have been increasing steadily. Intelligence sharing has been a major if often hidden aspect of the relationship for many years, particularly during the Cold War....both Israel and the United States have increased the emphasis on theater missile defense....The Israeli “Homa” (Wall) ballistic missile defense (BMD) project, which includes the “arrow” missile system, the “Green Pines” fire-control radar system, a command and control system and other sub-systems. Research and development of the Arrow is a joint U.S.-Israeli project, with Israel providing most of the technology and manpower, and the United States providing most of the R&D costs (expected to exceed \$2 billion)....U.S.-Israeli cooperation and division labor extends to this technology as well....In addition, the threat perceptions shared by the United States and Israel in the post-Cold War era have also highlighted the importance of continued cooperation in intelligence and assessment of threats....Israel provided UNSCOM with critical intelligence information on Saddam Hussein’s program of concealment and deceit. Israel has also been an important source of information on the Iranian WMD and missile programs, and on the role of Russia in the process.⁵⁰

The Steinberg’s explanation of the alliance, which is fairly typical of post-Cold War explanation’s of the alliance, is based on justifying the relationship in terms of specific cooperative programs while discounting the larger strategic burdens that the alliance with Israel imposes on the U.S.

Critique of Strategic Interest Approach. The argument that Israel is a strategic asset for the United States seems to fly in the face of the view of many scholars and

⁵⁰ Steinberg, Gerald. “Israel and the United States: Can the Relationship Survive the New Strategic Environment?” Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA) (Volume 2, Number 4, December, 1998)

former policymakers who have continued to believe that the American alliance with Israel has been a strategic albatross around America's neck. By allying itself with Israel, the United States seemed to push far larger and more populous Arab states -- such as Egypt (until Camp David), Algeria, Syria, and Iraq -- into the arms of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, American commitment to Israeli security seems to have impeded the regional peace process and undermined American influence and credibility in Arab world. By some accounts, America's "passionate" commitment to Israel has undermined its ability to act as a neutral mediator in the peace process, as argued by Naseer Aruri:

...Arabs and Palestinians have had to contend with a dangerous illusion; that the United States was capable of delivering a fair, just and durable peace in the region.... Assuming the role of referee and principal conciliator, however, simultaneously with the role of Israel's chief diplomatic backer, bank-roller and military supplier, the United States has placed itself at odds with the global consensus, which called for a political settlement with an international framework and sponsorship. As ally and protector of Israel, the U.S. was simply unable to credibly discharge its self-assigned mission as the catalyst for peace.⁵¹

These contradictions have become increasingly obvious during the 1990s as the United States tried, and failed, in its efforts to convince the intransigent Benjamin Netanyahu government (1996-99) and the Ehud Barak government (1999-2001) at Camp David to make concessions needed to implement the Oslo Peace Process. It is clear that the United States has developed a compartmentalized relationship with Israel.

During the post-Cold War period the "special relationship" has grown stronger than ever. The two countries signed a "Joint Statement of Strategic Cooperation" in

1996.⁵² While Israel certainly offers the U.S. some strategic benefits (as Steven Spiegel and Gerald Steinberg note above), this review make it clear that strategic value can not fully explain the unique relationship between the United States and Israel. Defined in the strictly geo-strategic and economic terms, which they usually are, the United States seems to be acting against its own national interests by establishing and maintaining a “special relationship” with a state that consistently refuses to accommodate make concessions that promote American interests in the region. American officials have consistently trumpeted Israel’s strategic importance, and ignored the strategic difficulties that the alliance often creates for the United States in the region. Thus Israel’s strategic value is mostly as a result of being in “special relationship” with the United States rather than a cause for need to maintain the alliance. The U.S. did not maintain its “special relationship” with Israel, because Israel was a tremendous strategic asset as much as Israel’s position as a strategic asset has continued to expand, because of the existing “special relationship.” So the relationship takes on a self-perpetuating quality enhanced by military and intelligence ties, personal relationships, shared outlooks, and a certain level of inertia.

The U.S. has undoubtedly attained some strategic benefits -- like those noted by Spiegel and Steinberg above -- from its alliance with Israel, but it is, at best, a highly

⁵¹ Aruri, Naseer. The Obstruction of Peace: The United States, Israel, and the Palestinians. (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1995): 19.

⁵² On April 30, 1996, the U.S. and Israel signed a “Joint Statement on Strategic Cooperation.” See Feldman, Shai. The Future of U.S.-Israel Strategic Cooperation: 71-72 for the full text of the agreement.

questionable proposition whether the benefits of the “special relationship” – which are often marginal and tactical rather than broadly strategic – have outweighed the strategic burden that it created since 1974. Much of the scholarship documenting the strategic relationship seems to bend over backwards to emphasize the ways in which Israel is a strategic asset while mostly ignoring the ways in which it is a strategic burden.

With the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, much of the American strategic rationale for maintaining a close strategic relationship with the State of Israel appears to have evaporated. With the Cold War over, the U.S. is left with two major strategic goals in the Middle East, maintaining international access to Arab oil and stabilizing the Arab-Israeli conflict. The 1991 Gulf War made it even clearer that Israel had become a political and a strategic burden. Israel’s vaunted military capabilities could not be used, because that would have endangered the coalition with moderate states against Iraq; in fact, the United States had to expend an extensive diplomatic effort in order to prevent Israel from responding militarily to Iraqi Scud attacks on Israel to preserve coalition against Iraq. Israel could play an active role in the military phase of the war, because of Arab objections. Furthermore, Israel became a strategic burden, because the U.S. had to assign Patriot Missile crews to Israel to defend it against Iraqi scud missile attacks.

The post-Gulf War policy of Bush and Baker pressuring Israel over the issue of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories seemed to be a step in the direction of pursuing America’s strategic goals. However, this policy resulted in a political firestorm

on the American domestic scene. In the end, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir held his ground against U.S. pressure, but was defeated in his 1992 re-election campaign and replaced by the Rabin government which was much more receptive to U.S. view of West Bank settlement expansion.

Following the September 11th attacks in the context of current “Global War on Terrorism,” the George W. Bush administration has continued to deepen its defense of Israel and its policies in the Occupied Territories even though these policies – along with the invasion of Iraq – have reinforced the hostility towards the United States in the Arab and Islamic world. Instead of addressing the issues of U.S. policy that have created popular support for al-Qaeda, the U.S. has pursued policies around the Israeli-Palestinian that increase and reinforce widespread hostility towards the United States. The neo-conservative view taken by the administration has been that U.S. interests in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are synonymous with the policies that Israeli government chooses to pursue. In so doing, the administration has appeared to put its loyalty and support for Israeli policies and supporting its policies ahead of its strategic interest in achieving a comprehensive Middle East peace. The Bush administration has essentially ignored the well-known views of foreign policy establishment views, such as those contained most recently reiterated in the December, 2006 bipartisan Iraq Study Group report that have called for active U.S. engagement in the conflict. The ISG report’s call for “sustainable negotiations leading to a final peace settlement along the lines of President Bush’s two-state solution, which would address the key final status issues of borders, settlements, Jerusalem, the right of return, and the end of conflict” reflects the long-established views

the foreign policy establishment have been supported rhetorically and ignored in practice by the current administration.⁵³

However, in the years since that time, the “special relationship” has not only survived, but in the Post-Cold War/Gulf War era it has grown even stronger. The Clinton and George W. Bush administrations have further strengthened and expanded America’s “special relationship” with Israel despite the fact that there are few obvious strategic benefits and numerous strategic liabilities to such a policy. This leads us to conclude that it is not strategic factors that hold the U.S.-Israel relationship together. If it were merely strategic factors, the relationship would have come apart at the end of the Cold War and following the 1991 Gulf War. Instead, it has become stronger. This leads to the inevitable conclusion that while the relationship was (and often still is) publicly defined as based on strategic concerns, its real foundation is in political and cultural factors that we will consider further below. Thus not only is the realist explanation of Israel’s strategic value unable to completely explain the compartmentalization of the U.S.-Israel “special relationship,” but it is completely unable to explain why the “special relationship” still exists in a post-Cold War reality.

During the early decades of the relationship, when political and cultural pressures were minimal, strategic factors dominated. However, more recently, political factors

⁵³ Iraq Study Group Report. (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, December, 2006): 41. From recommendation 17 of the ISG report. The key recommendations on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the report are contained in pages 39-41 and specifically recommendations 13 to 17.
http://www.usip.org/isg/iraq_study_group_report/report/1206/index.html

have become predominant. As we shall see, the strategic importance of Israel to United States does not dictate American policy towards Israel so much as it acts as a default factor upon which policymakers can rhetorically defend and justify their decisions when political pressures are insignificant or offsetting. Thus, we must begin to expand our concept of “national interests” and consider not only the strategic reality in which a country finds itself, but also how domestic political factors, the so-called “soft” factors, contribute to the decisions of American foreign policymakers and indeed to America’s definition of its “national interests” in the Middle East. In this regard, we will as we move through this analysis that the greatest difficulty with the realist approach is its attempt to define “national interests” in purely objective, economic, geo-strategic terms. The “national interest” is ultimately a subjective quality that emerges as much (and sometimes more) from America’s values and ideas as from the international balance of power concerns. Thus, despite the insistence of policymakers as to the primacy of geo-strategic factors, it is often politics and political culture that has, at least in recent decades, dictated policy decisions regarding America’s highly “passionate attachment” to Israel.

The Interest Group Approach. There is a significant school of thought that contends that the United States relationship with Israel is typical of those that have emerged in the Post-Cold War era. Samuel Huntington and Yossi Shain, in separate articles, use the pluralist interest group model of politics to argue that this relationship is merely one of many recent cases of U.S. foreign policies being shaped by ethnic Diasporas. Huntington argues that the combination of the end of the Cold War and the

rise of multicultural ethnic politics in the United States have led to a “domesticization of foreign policy.”⁵⁴ Huntington writes:

...[D]iasporas can influence the actions and policies of their host country [the U.S] and co-opt its resources and influence to serve the interests of their homeland. Ethnic groups have played active roles in politics throughout American history. Now, ethnic diaspora groups proliferate, are more active, and have greater self-consciousness, legitimacy, and political clout. In recent years, diasporas have had a major impact on American foreign policy towards Greece and Turkey, the Caucasus, the recognition of Macedonia, support for Croatia, sanctions against South Africa, aid for Black Africa, intervention in Haiti, NATO expansion, sanctions against Cuba, the controversy in Northern Ireland, and the relations between Israel and its neighbors. Diaspora-based policies...are often pursued at the expense of broader interests and American relations with long-standing allies. Overall, as James R. Schlesinger observed...the United States has “less of a foreign policy in a traditional sense of a great power than we have the stapling together of a series of goals put forth by domestic constituency groups....The result is that American foreign policy is incoherent.”⁵⁵

Yossi Shain adds that:

As U.S. strategic interests become less clear than they once were, and U.S. decision makers appear unable to articulate or execute a coherent global strategy, foreign policy becomes more susceptible to pressures by diasporic lobbies.... Indeed, if America is becoming a multicultural society with powerful ethnic influences, one should expect to see strong ramifications in U.S. foreign affairs including a redefinition of U.S. national interests.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Huntington, Samuel. “The Erosion of American National Interests.” Foreign Affairs. (September/October, 1997, Vol. 75, No. 5): 40

⁵⁵ Huntington: 39-40. Brackets added for clarification.

⁵⁶ Shain, Yossi. “Multicultural Foreign Policy.” Foreign Policy (No 100, Fall, 1995): 71-72.

While the critiques of Huntington and Shain offer considerable insight into the growing incoherence of American foreign policy, their analyses are broad generalizations, which do not fully account for the unique nature of the “special relationship” between the United States and Israel. The “special relationship,” unlike the many other ethnic-based policy alliances described above, emerged during the heart of the Cold War and has been maintained for three-and-a-half decades. Most other ethnic lobbies have merely shaped a relatively narrow U.S. policy towards a single country, not an entire region. No other ethnic lobby -- with perhaps the exception of Cuban-American Foundation -- has been able to exert such a sustained effect on the U.S. foreign policy over such an extended period of time through administrations of both parties. No other ethnic lobby has allowed its favored state to collect anywhere near the amount of U.S. foreign aid or to attain anywhere near the number of advanced weapons systems as has been the case with this “special relationship.” No other ethnic lobby has been able to promote the sustained passionate bipartisan defense of its country that has taken place in the case of Israel. Finally, no other ethnic lobby -- with perhaps the partial exception of Tibetan cause, which is often promoted by non-Tibetan Buddhists and human rights activists -- has been able to win the level of emotional and heartfelt support of large numbers of Americans who are not part of its ethnic group. In a set of polls commissioned for Israel’s 50th anniversary celebration, 56% of non-Jewish Americans had a “very favorable” or “mostly favorable” opinion of Israel and 76% of non-Jews said that U.S. had “a vital interest in Israel.”⁵⁷ Clearly, there is something that makes the U.S.

⁵⁷ “The New York Times Poll April 15-20, 1998.” New York Times, April 28,

relationship with Israel unique and different from other Diaspora-based alliances described by Huntington and Shain.

Mearsheimer and Walt argue that U.S.'s consistent and overwhelming support for Israel and its policies are the result of "the unmatched power of the Israel Lobby." They define the Lobby as "the loose coalition of individuals and organizations who actively work to steer U.S. foreign policy in a pro-Israel direction."⁵⁸ They further assert that "no lobby has managed to divert it [U.S. foreign policy] it as far from what the national interest would suggest, while simultaneously convincing Americans that the US interests and those of the other country – in this case, Israel – are essentially identical."⁵⁹ This brings this study to the role of American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the often-controversial and highly effective pro-Israel lobby. Fortune magazine named AIPAC the second most powerful lobby in Washington behind the much larger American Association of Retired Persons (AARP).⁶⁰ It has been said that politics abhors a vacuum. A significant part of AIPAC's success can certainly be attributed to the lack of significant, well-organized, well-funded opposition groups opposed to its policy agenda.

1998. The comparable figures for Jewish-Americans were 94% and 96%, respectively.

⁵⁸ Mearsheimer, John and Stephen Walt. "The Israel Lobby." London Review of Books. (Vol. 28, No. 6, March 23, 2006) The bibliography of this study contains a lengthy list of responses and critiques of Mearsheimer and Walt article.

⁵⁹ Mearsheimer, John and Stephen Walt. Brackets added by author for clarification.

⁶⁰ Birnbaum, Jeffrey H. "Washington's Power 25." Fortune. December 8, 1997. Former AIPAC President Melvin Dow has proudly observed that the AARP has twice as many members in the U.S. (33 million) as there are Jews in the entire world.

While this has slowly begun to change during the 21st century (as will be discussed in a later chapter), Mansour notes that the lobby “does not arouse the opposition of influential groups.”⁶¹ The corporate oil lobby, which might be expected to oppose AIPAC, has generally focused its extensive lobbying efforts on less controversial and less high-profile issues such tax policy, and mostly shied away from foreign policy issues.⁶² Whereas the pro-Israel lobby has been an expression of the political and organizational skills of the American Jewish community, the lack of a significant pro-Arab/pro-Palestinian lobby has been reflected the lack of such skills in the Arab- and Muslim-American communities.

As Michael Suleiman notes:

...the Zionists have the advantage of working in a society in which there was no equivalent countervailing pressure group. Thus, especially in 1948, but even today to a great extent, the absence of effective Arab associations working for Arab causes in the United States has made the Zionist task easier and the results of its efforts much greater. The Arab effort in the United States has also been handicapped by the fact that Arab-Americans are relatively small in number, not well-organized, tend to be non-political, and are fractionalized into numerous sectarian and “ethnic” groupings based on their country of origin.⁶³

These communities have been growing in the years since Suleiman wrote this description due to both Arab and Islamic immigration and conversion to Islam; nevertheless, much of this analysis remains essentially accurate. As a newer immigrant group many Arab and

⁶¹ Mansour, Camille. Beyond Alliance: Israel in U.S. Foreign Policy. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994): 247.

⁶² Bard. Mitchell. The Water's Edge and Beyond: Defining the Limits to Domestic Influence on United States Middle East Policy. 15-17.

⁶³ Suleiman, Michael. The Arabs in the Mind of America. (Brattleboro, VT: Amana Books, 1988): 5.

Muslim-Americans have been far less integrated into the American political system and far more reticent about expressing political views (in part, because they have often been unfamiliar with democratic political culture) as compared to the Jewish community. In addition, they have been more divided by internal political cleavages reflecting religious differences and nations of origin than the Jewish community. Bard notes that of three million Arabs in the United States, “approximately 80 percent of them are Lebanese Christians who tend to be unsympathetic to the Arab lobby’s goals.”⁶⁴ Those organizations that have been created to lobby against pro-Israel policies have often been small and ineffective.⁶⁵ In this policy vacuum, it has been relatively easy for AIPAC to succeed, because there have often been few political incentives for politicians to oppose them and numerous incentives to listen to them.

AIPAC has also been able to act as the consensus “pro-Israel” organization for the American Jewish community. In the 1980s, its primary intra-Jewish challenge came from the New Jewish Agenda (founded in 1980), a multi-issue left-wing group that attempted to organize “a Jewish voice on the Left and a Left voice in the Jewish community.”⁶⁶ This organization could never challenge AIPAC in terms of funding and

⁶⁴ Bard, Mitchell. The Water’s Edge and Beyond: Defining the Limits to Domestic Influence on United States Middle East Policy: 8. Bard’s figure of 3 million has probably increased since his work was published in 1991.

⁶⁵ For a general, if somewhat dated account of this issue, see Khoury, Nabeel A. “The Arab Lobby: Problems and Prospects.” Middle East Journal. (Vol. 41, No. 3, Summer, 1987)

⁶⁶ Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Jewish_Agenda

organization. Its multi-issue focus diluted its already limited resources. Its funding ran out in 1992. The emergence of internet organizing and the outbreak of the Second Intifada has begun to produce a new wave of Jewish organizing on this issue, which is just beginning to emerge as an alternative voice in the Jewish community. (This will be discussed in detail in a Chapter 7.)

Though AIPAC dates back to the early 1950s (when it initially used the name the American Zionist Committee for Public Affairs), it remained a relatively minor political player until the early 1980s.⁶⁷ There were, however, major Jewish campaign donors (especially as part of the Democratic coalition), who made significant donations to Presidential and Congressional campaigns before the rise of AIPAC. These donors acted more as individuals than as an organized pro-Israel lobby. It is, however, worth observing that Jewish friends, contributors, and advisors have influenced many U.S. Presidents to some degree -- although it is somewhat difficult to generalize on this point.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ For an account of AIPAC early days, it may be useful to consult the biography of its founding director, I.L. Kenen's who ran the organization from its inception until 1974. I.L. Kenen. Israel's Defense Line: Her Friends and Foes in Washington. (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1981)

⁶⁸ Every recent president from both parties has had established ties to various confidants and advisors within the Jewish community. Not surprisingly, Democrats have usually had more and often higher level Jewish contacts than Republicans. Truman's decision to meet with Zionist leader Chaim Weizman and, ultimately to recognize Israel, was influenced by his friend and former business partner, Eddie Jacobson. On the Republican side, Max Fisher was a major donor to the Eisenhower campaigns. Eisenhower's Jewish advisors included Lewis Strauss, Philip Klutznick, Maxwell Rabb, Arthur Burns, and Norman Cousins. Kennedy's friends and supporters included Dewey Stone, Abraham Ribicoff, Eugene Rostow, Philip Klutznick, Abraham Feinberg, and Myer Feldman. Lyndon Johnson supporters and advisors included James Novy and Supreme Court Justices Arthur Goldberg and Abraham Fortas. Fisher also acted as an

Additionally, Presidents and their administrations have been influenced by an electoral calculus in which the Jewish votes in key states (such as New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and California) have proved important -- especially to the Democratic Party. Jewish campaign contributions have also been important to Presidential candidates -- particularly in the Democratic primaries. Following his narrow victory in 1960, President Kennedy is even alleged (perhaps apocryphally) to have told Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion that, "I know I was elected because the votes of

informal advisor and diplomatic go-between for President Nixon. Nixon's Jewish advisors included Leonard Garment, Herbert Stein, Arthur Burns, William Safire, and, of course, his Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. Nixon was also fond of then-Israeli Ambassador Yitzhak Rabin. Ford maintained ties with the ubiquitous Max Fisher as well as Edward Levi, and Alan Greenspan. Jimmy Carter was close to Admiral Hyman Rickover. His Jewish appointees included Michael Blumenthal, Harold Brown, Philip Klutznick, Neil Goldschidt, Max Kampelman, Stuart Eizenstat, Edward Sanders, and Lloyd Cutler. Reagan had a nearly endless list of Jewish contacts from his Hollywood days. His Jewish political contacts included Milton Friedman, Ronald Lauder, Lenore Cohn Annenberg, Marshall Berger, Eugene Rostow, Max Kampelman, Richard Perle, Morris Abram, and William Kristol. George H.W. Bush's Jewish advisors included Jay Lefkowitz, William Kristol, Robert Strauss, Dennis Ross and Paul Wolfowitz. Bill Clinton's had the longest list of Jewish political and policy advisors including Madeline Albright (who didn't learn of her family's Jewish background until 1997), Robert Rubin, Lawrence Summers, William Cohen, Daniel Glickman, Mickey Kantor, Robert Reich, Jacob Lew, Richard Holbrooke, Charlene Barshefsky, Stuart Eisenstat, Martin Indyk, Daniel Kurtzer, Felix Rohatyn, Dennis Ross, Roger Altman, Samuel Berger, Sidney Blumenthal, Lloyd Cutler, Lynn Cutler, Rahm Emanuel, Stanley Greenberg, Alan Greenspan, Mandy Grunwald, Ann Lewis, Ira Magaziner, Abner Mikva, Dick Morris, and Alice Rivlin. During his first term Clinton also established a close bond with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin -- who was assassinated in 1995. Finally, the current President, George W. Bush has had numerous key neo-conservative Jewish advisors in the area of foreign policy including Paul Wolfowitz, Douglas Feith, Richard Perle, Elliot Abrams, and William Kristol. Bush was close to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon until he was incapacitated by a stroke in January, 2006. Except for the current administration, the Jewish advisors listed above are taken from various chapters on individual administrations in Dalin, David D. & Alfred J. Kolatch. The Presidents of the United States & the Jews. (New York: Jonathan David Publishers, Inc., 2000)

American Jews. I owe them my election. Tell me, is there something that I can do for the Jewish people?”⁶⁹

The expansion of American foreign aid to Israel -- that has come to signify the “special relationship” -- came under President Richard Nixon. Ironically, Nixon was probably the American President who owed the least to the Jewish voters.⁷⁰ Nixon lost the Jewish vote to Hubert Humphrey by a large margin in 1968, and did not expect to do much better among this generally liberal constituency in the 1972 election.⁷¹ Nixon’s initial decision to expand foreign aid, as noted above, appears to have been primarily strategic, not political.⁷² In 1974, the introduction of what became known as the “oil weapon” shifted the strategic analysis. The dramatic events of the oil embargo made

⁶⁹ Tivnan, Edward. The Lobby: Jewish Political Power and American Foreign Policy. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987): 56. Tivnan is quoting from Michael Bar-Zohar Hebrew biography, Ben-Gurion (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1977)

⁷⁰ It’s perhaps even more ironic that the Nixon tapes have revealed Nixon’s noxious streak of anti-Semitism.

⁷¹ In spite of the Democratic leanings of most American Jews, the Israeli Ambassador to the United States, Yitzhak Rabin, informally endorsed President Nixon during the 1972 campaign and encouraged American Jews to vote for Nixon. Nixon’s percentage of the Jewish vote rose from 20% in 1968 to 40% in 1972. However, it should be noted that Nixon won in a landslide in 1972 against a weak Democratic opponent, George McGovern. Raviv and Melman: 156

⁷² Ironically, despite the presence of key Jewish advisors like Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and speechwriter William Safire, there is at least some evidence of Nixon making anti-Semitic comments on the famous White House tapes. Nixon’s anti-Semitic vitriol appears to have been directed at the liberal New York Jews who opposed many of his policies and thus have been more political than personal in some sense.

clear -- strategically and economically -- what policymakers starting with Secretary of State George Marshall had insisted America's best interest lay with the Arab states.

However, in one of the ironies of history, it is in that same year that a new campaign finance system redefined the rules of American politics. Following the resignation of President Nixon in 1974, Congress passed a sweeping campaign finance reform law that was intended to "clean-up" American politics after the excesses of the Watergate scandal. Over the next few years that system dramatically altered the political incentives within the American electoral system. Initially, many Jewish leaders opposed the campaign finance reform. However, one of the many unintended consequences of this law was that it increased the power of the pro-Israel lobby and thus, over time, greatly strengthened the "special relationship" at a time when strategic factors would have led one to expect its decline. The political action committee (PAC)⁷³ system turned out to be a blessing in disguise for a pro-Israel lobby that initially looked in dismay at the reform process. Tivnan writes that:

Jewish fund-raisers soon realized that they could not have created a better power tool for the American Jewish community than PAC.... Creating political action committees turned out to be a snap for the American Jewish community, which already had in place the most impressive grass-roots fund-raising apparatus in history.... The move from the fund-raising offices of the United Jewish Appeal or Jewish National Fund or Israel Bond Drives or local Federations of Jewish Philanthropies to setting

⁷³ It is commonly assumed that AIPAC is a PAC. The PAC in AIPAC stands for "public affairs committee," not "political action committee." AIPAC's name predates the creation of PACs. It is a registered lobby, but it cannot participate *directly* in fund-raising. However, it is widely believed that AIPAC indirectly coordinates a network of stealth PACs.

up a pro-Israel political action committee was a baby step. American Jews had actually gained a stronger weapon for influencing policy.⁷⁴

According to Tivnan, by the early 1980s AIPAC “seemed to own Capitol Hill.”⁷⁵

Several Congressmen and Senators who opposed AIPAC’s priorities were defeated in primary or general elections by opponents funded by AIPAC allied PACs.⁷⁶ Richard Curtiss has argued that AIPAC has set up a network of “stealth PACs” to funnel money to its supporters in Congress in order to evade the campaign finance laws.⁷⁷ AIPAC is officially only an information-gathering and lobbying organization. However, a complaint filed with the Federal Election Commission by several former government officials contended that AIPAC steers donors towards a network of inconspicuously named PACs -- National PAC, Washington PAC, Joint Action Committee for Political Affairs among others -- which then donate that money to pro-Israel candidates.⁷⁸ Many of

⁷⁴ Tivnan: 85-86.

⁷⁵ Tivnan: 187.

⁷⁶ According to Findley, Paul. They Dare to Speak Out: People and Institutions Confront Israel’s Lobby. (Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill & Company, 1985), and Curtiss, Richard H. Stealth PACs: Lobbying Congress for Control of U.S. Middle East Policy (Washington, DC: American Education Trust, 1996), these include Reps. Paul Findley (R-III) in 1982, Rep. McCloskey (D-CA) in 1982 Senate Primary, Sen. George McGovern (D-SD) in 1980, Sen. Roger Jepsen (R-IA) in 1984, and perhaps most dramatically Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Sen. Charles Percy (R-IL) in 1984.

⁷⁷ Curtiss, Richard. Stealth PACs.

⁷⁸ Curtiss, Richard. Stealth PACs. The complaint is described in the preface of Curtiss’s book, which was written by Andrew Kilgore. The complaint was filed in 1988 by Curtiss, a former chief of the U.S. Information Agency, Kilgore, former ambassador to Qatar, former Undersecretary of State George Ball, former U.S. Ambassador to Saudi

the board members of AIPAC also serve on the boards of these PACs. Since candidates can receive money from more than one of these apparently coordinated PACs in the same electoral cycle, critics argue that these actions amount to a violation of the spirit, and perhaps the letter, of the campaign finance laws. Fund-raising by these pro-Israel “stealth” PACs increased dramatically in the 1980s, although it has declined and leveled off in more recent electoral cycles. (For a chart of the levels of donations see Appendix C)

Critics of American policy in the Middle East, such as James Bill, have argued that the “special relationship” stems almost solely from “the influence Israel is able to muster in the American political system” which has allowed it to establish what is “widely assumed to be its unassailable power base in Congress.”⁷⁹ Edward Tivnan notes that the pro-Israel “Lobby is powerful enough to engender fear among dissenters in the uppermost levels of American government...”⁸⁰ Former Rep. Paul Findley (R-IL) goes much further. He endorses former California Congressman Paul McCloskey’s statement

Arabia James Akins, former Congressman Paul Findley, Robert Hanks, a former commander of the U.S. Navy’s Middle East Task Force, and former Amideast President Orin Parker. On June 1, 1998, the U.S. Supreme Court in *F.E.C. vs. Akins* ruled that the plaintiffs had standing to sue, and sent the issue back to a lower court to make a final determination. Greenhouse, Linda. “High Court Lowers Shield of Election Panel; Also Agrees to Hear Deportation Appeal.” New York Times (National Edition). June 2, 1998. Page A16.

⁷⁹ Bill, James A. and Robert Springborg. Politics in the Middle East (Fourth Edition) (New York: Harper Collins College Publishers, 1994): 363.

⁸⁰ Tivnan: 12.

that “Congress is ‘terrorized’ by AIPAC”⁸¹ Findley goes on to argue that AIPAC has so effectively silenced those who oppose its positions that “many Americans do not feel they can speak freely on one of the most complicated and challenging current issues: The Arab-Israeli dispute.”⁸²

Critique of Interest Group Approach. Upon closer examination, serious questions arise as to whether the campaign contributions can really provide a comprehensive explanation of the “special relationship.” While lobbying clearly plays an important role in American foreign policy in the Middle East, it does not seem to be able to fully account for either the durability or the unique level of “passion” of this special alliance. Furthermore, this argument assumes that a small, albeit relatively wealthy, ethnic group -- representing well under 3% of the American population and approximately 4% of total campaign contributions⁸³ -- can manipulate the American political system against the presumed strategic and economic interests of American public and the interests of some of its largest corporations. If this is the case, one wonders why other ethnic and religious groups -- with far more total membership and

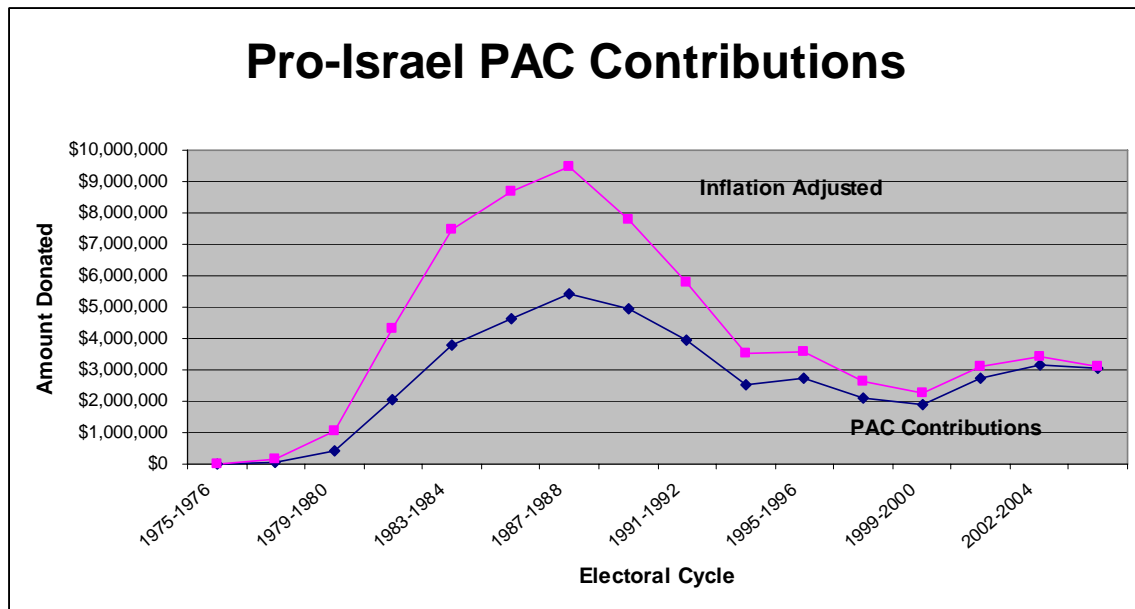
⁸¹ Findley, Paul. They Dare to Speak Out: 26.

⁸² Findley, Paul. They Dare to Speak Out: 315

⁸³ Mansour, Camille. Beyond Alliance: Israel in U.S. Foreign Policy. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994): 246. This figure is from Fialka, John and Brooks Jackson. “Pro-Israel Lobby: Jewish PACs Emerge As a Powerful Force In U.S. Election Races --- They Gave \$3.6 Million in '84 And Helped Beat Percy; Still, Some Doubt Impact --- Too Tied to a Single Issue?” Wall Street Journal. (February 26, 1985) The figure is for the 1984 campaign, which is a fairly typical year near the peak of pro-Israel fund-raising totals in Appendix C.

wealth -- have not been able to manipulate American foreign policy just as successfully for their favored countries. Thus these critics of the relationship seem to have exaggerated the power of financial influence of “the lobby” without truly examining the roots of its power within the American culture which will be examined further in later chapters.

An extensive analysis of the campaign finance records from the Federal Election Commission and the Center for Responsive Politics shows that the 35 “pro-Israel” Political Action Committees identified with AIPAC donated roughly \$3 million in 2006 electoral cycle spread out strategically among 59 Senate candidates and 219 House candidates. Since the creation of the system of PACs in the mid-1970s, AIPAC’s stealth PACs have given roughly \$43 million (or \$66 million in inflation-adjusted 2007 dollars) to thousands of different candidates. This averages out to roughly \$3 million during each cycle since they got off the ground in the early 1980s. Most interestingly, the level of donations from these PACs peaked with the 1987-88 electoral cycle; both the number of PACs and the amount donated has been decreasing sharply since that time – especially in inflation-adjusted dollars. (See Appendix C for total for each electoral cycle and the accompanying graph below.) If the contributions were a really influential tool for influencing lawmakers, the expectation would be that the amount-donated would continue to increase or at least remain steady.



In the 2006 cycle, the largest Senate recipient was Sen. Joe Lieberman (I-CT) who received \$156,593 from 25 different PACs. In the House, Rep. Mark Kirk (R-IL) received \$75,064 from 14 different PACs. (The largest recipients are listed in Appendix D). The average Senate recipient of this money received about \$27,000. The average House recipient received just over \$6000. While these sums are not insignificant, they are relatively small in terms of the multi-million dollar House and Senate campaign budgets. These PACs direct almost all of their money to incumbent Senators and House members whose voting record had already demonstrated their loyalty on AIPAC's key issues. They very rarely invest money in non-incumbents until they have demonstrated that they have a record of supporting AIPAC's priorities. Of course, there are other donations from individuals and bundled contributions, but these are more difficult to track than those being steered through PACs. All in all, the logical conclusion is that money buys access to members of Congress and their staffs allowing them to arrange

meetings and make their case. Contributions make it is easier to get access to the members and their key staffers much more easily than those who can not afford to make generous contributions. In general, it allows them to make their case to incumbents who are already sympathetic to their position and already have voting records that demonstrate their positions. There is little to indicate that most members of Congress vote in favor of AIPAC's positions because of these campaign donations. Rather they start receiving contributions from AIPAC's allies because they agree with its priorities and continue to receive money as long as they continue to support its positions. Thus the donations mostly act as reinforcement of existing positions, and the access that these donations provides serves as means of providing members with information that continues to reinforce their pre-existing sympathies.

Another part of the financial contributions approach is the argument that AIPAC is able to defeat members of Congress in either primaries or general election who consistently disagree with their positions. While there are a few celebrated cases, this mostly seems to be a myth created mutually by AIPAC's friends to enhance their power and its critics who are attempting to demonize and exaggerate its influence. This theory overlooks another very important aspect of American politics: the power of incumbency. In most electoral cycles, incumbent members of Congress are re-elected at a rate of upwards of 90%. Most districts of the U.S. House of Representatives have been so gerrymandered that they are nearly locked in for one-party or another. Most incumbents are also extremely difficult to defeat in intra-party primaries. Even well-funded primary challengers rarely succeed.

While there are a few cases in which AIPAC has mobilized its support against members that it viewed as particularly strong political opponents in Congress such as Rep. Paul Findley (R-IL), Sen. Charles Percy (R-IL) in the early 1980s, and more recently Rep. Cynthia McKinney (D-GA), and Sen. Lincoln Chafee (R-RI), there is little indication that AIPAC's resources were really decisive in most of these races. The pro-Israel PACs provided only \$27,200 to McKinney's opponent, Rep. Hank Johnson (D-GA). The Pro-Israel PACs provided Steven Laffey, Chafee's Republican primary opponent, with \$24,750 and his general election opponent Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse with \$75,500. While these sums are significant, they probably weren't enough swing the balance in these campaigns. Chafee is widely understood to have lost, because he was a Republican running in heavily Democratic state in a heavily Democratic electoral cycle when his seat was widely and correctly understood to be necessary to achieve a Democratic majority in the Senate.

AIPAC and the Jewish lobby have only targeted and defeated a very small number of incumbent members of Congress over the years. A fairly typical case is Georgia Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney who was widely known as a critic of Israel. McKinney was targeted and defeated by another African-American in a primary in 2002. But McKinney was incredibly vulnerable because of her penchant for controversial remarks including an outrageous statement that President Bush knew about the September 11th attacks ahead of time. While the pro-Israel lobby played a role in financing her opponent and helping to defeat her, it was only able to do so because other factors had made her extremely vulnerable. Ironically, McKinney was re-elected to

Congress in 2004 when the opponent that defeated her made an unsuccessful bid for a Senate seat. She was then defeated a second time in a Democratic primary in 2006. While AIPAC played a role in financing her opponent, her political situation was made much worse by her outrageous public statements and an incident in which she apparently hit a Capitol Hill policeman who stopped her while she was going through a security checkpoint.

In general, the candidates that AIPAC has campaigned against were candidates who were already weakened for a variety of reasons that had little to do with their positions on Israel. AIPAC can do little to threaten most members of the House of Representatives, because most members have been gerrymandered into safe districts. Most Senators are also well-protected by the advantages of incumbency although their statewide races are a bit more competitive than most U.S. House districts. While Cynthia McKinney was an exception, most members are also well enough established to fend off a primary opponent. As a rule, the power of incumbency would seem to provide a significant limit on the ability of AIPAC to “punish” most member of Congress as some of its critics have asserted.

The argument that AIPAC had the power to defeat opponents was stronger when AIPAC was building its reputation in the 1980s and the giving of its network of PACs was at its maximum. Its level of donation has been declining since its peak in late 1980s. (See the chart above and more details in Appendix C.) In 1984, AIPAC’s director Tom Dine claimed that AIPAC was responsible for defeating Senator Charles Percy. Records

indicate that its network donated over \$300,000 to his successful opponent Paul Simon.⁸⁴ This may be one of the AIPAC strongest claims. While there are some cases, where AIPAC's and its network of "Stealth PACs" may have been the key actors in defeating a particularly lawmaker, these cases seem to be few-and-far-between. In most cases, they seem to result from AIPAC spotting an opportunity to defeat a vulnerable critic and taking advantage of that opportunity. Indeed, there are numerous members who have long records of criticizing Israel and U.S. foreign policy who AIPAC and its allies has never seriously attempted to challenge, because they know they wouldn't be able to come close to mounting a successful challenge.

While it is certainly clear that the money that AIPAC can use in elections provides to candidates gains access to continue to build relationships with members of Congress, there is little proof of the often crude arguments that AIPAC and its network of "Stealth PACs" have bought control of Congress and can use money to control how members or vote and defeat those who disagree with them.

Furthermore, this approach also seems to misunderstand the manner in which foreign policy is made in the United States. Constitutionally, the nexus of foreign policy making is in the Executive Branch, not the Congress, so the assumption that contributions to Congressional campaigns shapes policies around crucial decisions around the Israeli-Palestinian peace process seems highly problematic. Congress acts mostly as an

⁸⁴ Fialka, John and Brooks Jackson. "Pro-Israel Lobby: Jewish PACs Emerge As a Powerful Force In U.S. Election Races --- They Gave \$3.6 Million in '84 And Helped Beat Percy; Still, Some Doubt Impact --- Too Tied to a Single Issue?" Wall Street Journal. (February 26, 1985)

intermediary filtering public opinion and transmitting it to the decision-making bodies in the Executive Branch.

Perhaps, most importantly, theories of lobby's effectiveness in influencing Congress are rarely able to explain the policies of the Executive Branch. In a dated, but still useful account, Steven Spiegel, writing about Presidential decision-making, argues that:

Domestic politics affects the timing and handling of [Presidential] decisions [regarding Israel] more than their actual content. Presidents try to avoid antagonizing Israel's supporters in an election year, especially a presidential election year. They will delay decisions or manipulate announcements so they receive credit for favorable actions. Yet they make decisions generally for reasons of state, largely unrelated to domestic politics and often in defiance of domestic groups.⁸⁵

Spiegel's account tends to predate the full-scale development of the pro-Israel lobby and the full blossoming of the "special relationship." It is a useful description of the "special relationship" of the 1970s when strategic concerns still dominated, but proves less so in describing later periods. In today's political climate, it is easy to assume that campaign contributions have always dictated American foreign policy priorities in the Middle East or other parts of the world. While many scholars (including Huntington and Shain above) believe that the Clinton administration's foreign policy has been deeply influenced by ethnic campaign contributors, the question of whether or not the same explanation can be applied retroactively to preceding administrations remains a bit more

complicated. This straightforward pluralist explanation greatly underestimates the complexity of the issues and ideas involved. No less a critic of American policy than the aforementioned Noam Chomsky argues that, “No pressure group will dominate access to public opinion or maintain consistent influence over policy-making unless its aims are close to those of elite elements with real power.”⁸⁶

While the pro-Israel lobby has proven itself very effective over the years, it seems hard to believe that the contributions of AIPAC’s “stealth PACs” can fully explain the “special relationship” at the level of the Executive Branch. The pro-Israel lobby is demonstrably more influential facilitating passage of the foreign aid bill and pro-Israel legislation, such as the aforementioned Embassy Relocation Act and several acts placing sanctions against Iran, than it is at influencing the most important Executive Branch decisions around the Oslo peace process, which have been made primarily in the State Department and the White House. By Constitutional design, the Executive branch institutions, not the Congress makes the most significant foreign policy decisions. While these institutions are far from immune from political pressures, they have historically been somewhat more removed from the immediate fray of every day political pressures and by design and history far more able than the “people’s branch” to examine the broader array of interests that effect foreign policy decisions. Many of the staff people in

⁸⁵ Spiegel, Steven: The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict: Making America’s Middle East Policy, from Truman to Reagan. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985): 386. Brackets added.

⁸⁶ Chomsky, Noam. The Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel and the Palestinians (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1983): 17.

these branches, particularly the State Department, are career professionals who are relatively immune to politics and lobbying. Even the Congress recognizes this. When they pass extremely political bills, such as the 1995 Jerusalem Embassy Act (which calls for the relocation of the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem), or most recently the 2006 Palestinian Anti-terrorism Act (A response to the Hamas victory in the Palestinian elections), they almost always included a national security waiver to allow the President to waive the bill that they passed. In a sense this is Congress's way of recognizing the inherently political nature of its actions and its inability to enact a coherent foreign policy separate from politics. In the case of the Embassy bill, the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations have always exercised their national security waivers knowing that such a move would be detrimental to the peace process.

At the level of the Executive branch, Presidential decision-making has been far less influenced by contributions. Promises made by Presidential candidates in the heat of election campaigns -- such as Bill Clinton's 1992 campaign promise to relocate the American embassy -- are often broken once the election is over. There is always a significant gap between campaign rhetoric and the policy that Presidents and their administration enact once they are in office and can take a more careful look at the nation's actual strategic interests in an environment that while not removed from political forces is far more insulated than on the campaign trail. Campaign donations rarely seem to be the most significant factor in determining American foreign policy in such sensitive regions. The Middle East is simply too strategically sensitive for contributions to completely shape American policy towards Israel and the region as a whole.

During primary and general election campaigns candidates are widely expected to conform with the rhetorical expectations of the Pro-Israel Lobby and commit themselves to support Israel particularly when address Jewish audiences. Candidates who fail to tow the “pro-Israel” line, particularly in the Democratic primaries, are often severally criticized for doing so. For example, in September, 2003, then-Democratic front-runner Howard Dean was widely criticized by supporters of Israel for saying, “the United States needs an even-handed approach in the conflict.”⁸⁷ Since few serious candidates challenge party orthodoxy on this issue, and because no issue exists in a vacuum, it is difficult to say how important promising to conform on this issue is to attaining the nomination of either major party. The biggest influence appears to be over the campaign rhetoric which then creates a structure of political commitments that winning candidates have committed to. The fact that they have made these commits than to serves to impose limits on the political flexibility of each President to act once he is in office. Such promises do not preclude a President taking an aggressive line on pressuring the Israelis to pursue the peace process, but they create an additional hurdle that makes such options more difficult to pursue.

Thus, there appears to be an institutional partitioning of the relationship between the branches of government. While Congress, and by extension the President, are influenced by campaign donations to appropriate extraordinarily disproportionate sums of

⁸⁷ <http://www.snopes.com/politics/israel/dean.asp> While this was widely considered to be a gaffe, there is little evidence that this particular incident played a major role in the collapse of the Howard Dean’s campaign several months later.

foreign aid to Israel, but the more strategically important diplomatic decisions are the purview of the Executive branch and its national security bureaucracy. These bureaucracies and the political appointees that lead them may give a voice to pro-Israel lobby, but they do not allow them to shape policy decisions. The pro-Israel lobby thus is able to play a dominant role over significant decisions on financial and symbol issues, but its ability to influence key strategic policy decisions around the peace process appears to be far more limited.

Those who attribute the durability of the “special relationship” to AIPAC’s ability to direct contributions into the coffers of Congressional, and even Presidential, candidates are actually misunderstanding the nature of the American political system within which AIPAC operates. AIPAC’s lobbying efforts do not occur in a political vacuum independent of American society. There is plenty of evidence to suggest that some Congressional actions are directly influenced by campaign cash, but these issues are usually more low profile, usually domestic issues where Congress has more influence, and usually about financial and budgetary issues where Congress predominates.

Of course, contributions do provide donors with access to members of Congress, but it is unclear whether that access does much more than the grassroots lobbying that AIPAC and its supporters use to pressure members of Congress. Furthermore, the enormous and highly sophisticated work of AIPAC and a wide variety of American Jewish groups to sell their ideas to both to the general public and the members of Congress suggests that they realize that while campaign contributions may be a useful

tool, it is far from sufficient to write a check to a member of Congress and expect that he or she will vote for your policies. The so-called “legalized bribery” of campaign contributions to politicians can only take place within a cultural, moral, and ideological context that legitimizes the adoption of policies that are overwhelmingly sympathetic to the state of Israel.

In their highly debated article Mearsheimer and Walt assert “that the bond between the two countries [the United States and Israel] was based on shared strategic interests or compelling moral imperatives, but neither explanation can account for the remarkable level of material and diplomatic support that the US provides [to Israel].”⁸⁸ As noted above, they are essentially correct about the lack of synonymous strategic interests and that Israel may, in fact, be more of a strategic burden than a strategic interest in the context of the Global War on Terrorism. However, their argument for the lack of “compelling moral” case in which they state that “viewed objectively, its [Israel’s] past and present conduct offers no moral basis for privileging it over the Palestinians”⁸⁹ is far too simplistic. In large part, this is because they assume in their own words that morality can be “viewed objectively” and they attempt to privilege their own moral standards over those of held by a majority of the American public. As will be discussed in detail in upcoming chapters, morality is to a great degree a subjective quality that is culturally and political determined. While Mearsheimer and Walt don’t see an “objective” rationale for

⁸⁸ Mearsheimer and Walt. Brackets added by author for clarification.

⁸⁹ Mearsheimer and Walt.

supporting Israel millions of American Jews and Christians do see moral reasons for supporting Israel based on their interpretation of America's values. Mearsheimer and Walt may not agree with their moral interpretation of millions of Americans and their representatives, but it is too simplistic to dismiss their views as not being moral-determined ones.

Mearsheimer and Walt instead explain U.S. policy as being, as noted above, the result of the "unmatched power of the Israel lobby."⁹⁰ They do an excellent job of presenting copious examples of this power without really explaining its origins in American society and culture. In so doing, they fail to see that the Lobby is less of an explanation of the "special relationship" than a product of it -- after all, the Lobby didn't become a dominant power in Washington until about a decade after the formation of the alliance in 1970. The power of the Lobby itself rather than being a full explanation of the

⁹⁰ While it goes a bit beyond the scope of this project, the author feels compelled to note that Mearsheimer and Walt's claim that "pressure from Israel and the Lobby was not the only factor behind the decision to attack Iraq in March 2003, but it was critical" seems a bit exaggerated and is not substantiated in their article. The pressure for a war in Iraq, was by and large, from neo-conservatives -- inside and outside the administration -- with a much larger than vision for democratizing the Middle East. Many of the neo-conservative had ties to the pro-Israel Lobby and to prominent Israeli political leaders and many of the neo-conservatives were very supportive of the Lobby's policies, but it is a bit of a stretch to argue that the Lobby played a large role in persuading the U.S. to invade Iraq. Those who have followed the activities of the Pro-Israel Lobby, including this author, recognize that the pro-Israel Lobby has been much more concerned about the threats posed to Israel by Syria and Iran than those posed by Iraq. As the administration moved towards war with Iraq, the Lobby appears to have supported the administration's actions in the context of the post-September 11th Global War on Terror, but there is little indication that they were particularly influential in prompting the administration to move in that particular direction since they realized that Iraq was contained and posed a minimal threat to Israel's security.

U.S.-Israel alliance really requires an explanation. Thus it is to American society and its political culture that we must turn to for a fuller explanation of the motives of American policymakers. As early as 1973, William Quandt perceptively recognized a phenomenon that was to become even more pronounced in the years to come. As Quandt noted lobbying could not fully explain a phenomenon that was ultimately cultural:

Probably the most important domestic factor in the United States policymaking in the Middle East consists of the widespread predisposition among officials and the general public to favor Israel over Arab states. This is not the result of specific pressures by pro-Israeli groups or the Zionist lobby, but rather it reflects the fact that for over two decades Israel's side of the story has been heard repeatedly in the press, in schools, and in other mass media. Since many Americans, including policy-makers, take for granted the merits of the Israeli case, it is not often necessary for pro-Israeli groups to use heavy-handed pressure. Instead, they need to define issues, to keep Israeli security at the forefront of attention, and to provide political favors for specific congressmen. When this is done, the rest can be left to friendly predispositions towards Israel and to the effective Israeli embassy in Washington. President Johnson and his close advisors were not the object of pressure by pro-Israeli groups largely because they agreed with these groups on most basic issues.⁹¹

Thus it becomes obvious that long before AIPAC or "stealth PACs" appeared on the Washington scene, policy elites (in both the Legislative and Executive branches) were predisposed towards treating Israel sympathetically. Palestinian scholar Camille Mansour summarizes the issue quite well as follows:

There is a remarkable disproportion between the intrinsic dimension of the [pro-Israel] lobby, limited after all in demographic and even financial terms, and its considerable power. The lobby's admirable organization, the multiplier factors of Jewish financial power, and the Jewish vote are

⁹¹ Quandt, William. "Domestic Influences on United States Foreign Policy in the Middle East: The View from Washington." The Middle East: The Quest for American Policy. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1973)

not sufficient in themselves to establish this power. What would be the point of explaining American-Israeli relations by the power of the lobby if this power itself remained unexplained or unexplainable? The power of the lobby, rather than explaining the privileged character of American-Israeli relations, needs itself to be explained. And it can be explained only by factors external to the lobby -- factors that not only constitute reasons for its great success but also contribute in turn to explaining directly the special relationship between the United States and Israel.⁹²

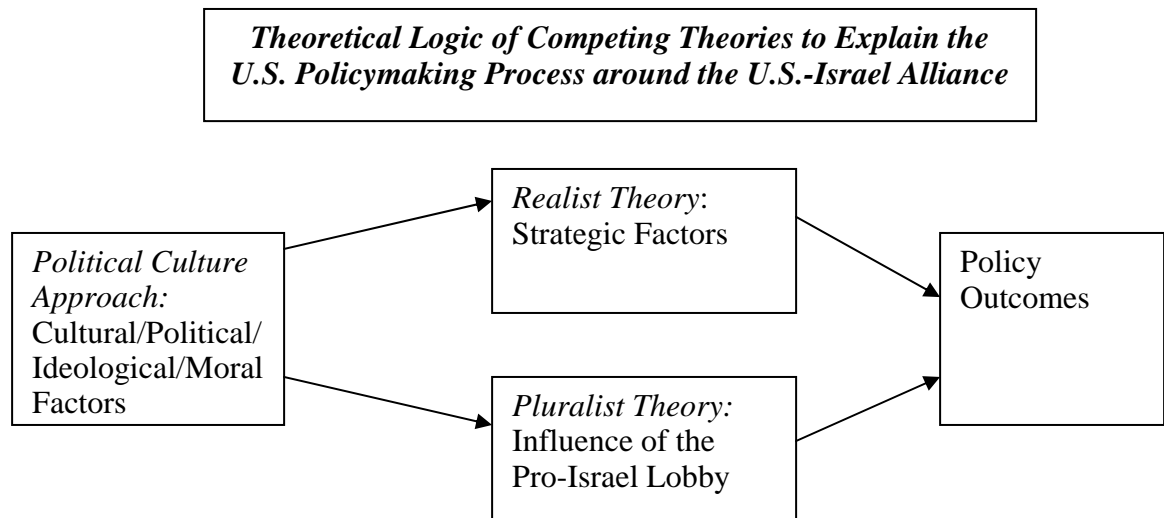
The prevailing rationalist and pluralist explanations offered are not so much incorrect as they are incomplete and partial explanations of the U.S.-Israel alliance. While strategic factors are certainly important to the thinking of policymakers, they can not be viewed as fully objective rationale explanation of American behavior towards Israel. While there is clearly an objective reality of U.S. strategic interest following it would not produce the policy results that we see. Instead, it becomes clear that the definition of American strategic interests is determined by a set of existing political predispositions through which policymaking elites view the conflict. Policymaking can never be fully “objective” or “rational,” because it can never be divorced from its political and cultural context that shapes the context of what policy-makers see as being strategically advantageous.

Similarly, while pluralist theory offers a partial explanation of how the alliance functions and the importance of the role of the Pro-Israel lobby, it can not as Mansour suggests explain why the Lobby is so powerful and influential, because it doesn’t explain why it has so much money and so much political influence. Only by incorporating a

⁹² Mansour, Camille: Beyond Alliance: Israel in U.S. Foreign Policy. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994): 257-258. Brackets added for clarification.

broader political culture approach can we begin to see how the power of the pro-Israel is empowered by the cultural lens through which policy-making elites interpret the Middle East which make them initially sympathetic and receptive to both the Lobby's arguments and its enticements before representatives from the Lobby ever approach them or offer them a single donation. (The diagram on the next page presents this argument in highly simplified form.)

Now let us turn to trying to explain to a careful examination of the external cultural factors that underlie the American "predispositions" that have made the patron-client relationship between Israel and the United States so unique, so durable, so different, and so much more "passionate" than any of the United States' other bilateral alliances.



Chapter 2 – Political Cultural Explanation

“[The Holy Land] always brought to my mind a vague suggestion of a country as large as the United States. I suppose it was because I could not conceive of a small country having so long a history.” - Mark Twain, Innocents Abroad, 1867

As noted above, realist and pluralist interest group theories only tell part of the story of the U.S.-Israel alliance without providing the full explanatory context that incorporates cultural forces including the larger society's moral values, images, ideas and ideologies which act as interpretive cultural lenses through which Americans have come to view both Israel and the Middle East. These lenses distort the picture that is seen putting more emphasis on some aspects of reality and less on others. As Mark Twain suggests, the image in the American mind of the “Holy Land” is very different from the one that he found when he actually arrived there in person.

These lenses predispose American policymaking elites to take a positive view of Israel -- as being similar to and compatible with America -- and predispose Americans to seeing the Arab and Islamic worlds negatively as opposite then themselves. The basic perennial images of how Israel is seen in the United States was well established in the American mindset since the 1950s and 1960s and will be described in much greater detail below. They have shaped the context in which U.S. administration have defined America's strategic interests. The images are filtered through a series of cultural institutions (film, TV, Media, Museums, educational institutions, religious institutions) within the society which over time adapt them to changing trends, ideas, and current events within the society. The culture then shapes both mass opinion and elite opinion

which are further filtered through a variety of political institutions (lobbies, parties, and even Congress). These political institutions help shape and reshape information fed into the Executive Branch which ultimately makes the key policy decisions. Thus some of the images are strengthened and others weakened over time. Some images are adapted to take on new meanings and layers of interpretation within new contexts. As a whole, the broader cultural framework maintains a flexible, adaptive structure that adjusts to absorb new events and situations while maintaining a basic continuity.

The U.S.-Israel alliance has been built on this cultural framework which has shaped the alliance and its inner workings. A series of dramatic cultural shifts, including the Civil Rights movement, the rise of the religious right, and the increased tension with the Islamic world following the Arab Oil Embargo, occurred in the 1960s and 1970s. These cultural transformations would ultimately, if largely unintentionally, affect the images that Americans held of Israel and the Middle East. These immense events transformed the way in which American society has viewed the roles of American Jews, the political role of Christianity, and the relationship of America to the Islamic world. Thus cultural continuity and inertia acts as the glue that holds the U.S.-Israel alliance together while at the same time the alliance continues to adapt and adjust to new events and situations. The two largest shifts in the strategic environment (1974 Arab Oil Embargo and the 1989 End of the Cold War) both resulted in brief periods of the retrenchment (under the administrations of Gerald Ford and George H.W. Bush, respectively), but the alliance like a stretched rubber band quickly snapped back into place.

As has been described in the Introduction and Chapter 1 above, the essential and distinguishing feature that separates a strategically-defined alliance from a culturally-defined alliance between Israel and the United States is in the way in which policy is compartmentalized. In the early years of emerging U.S.-Israel strategic alliance (roughly the 1960s) and the first decade of the U.S.-Israel “special relationship” (roughly the 1970s), the United States premised the alliance on the strategic rationale that Israel was a strategic asset in the Cold War fight against communism and that a close alliance with Israel could be used as strategic leverage to advance the Middle East peace process (first with the Arab states and later with the Palestinians) which would resolve a nagging source of regional instability. Thus the strategic alliance with Israel was a tool for advancing the peace process.

Beginning in the 1980s and particularly in the last two decades, the U.S.-Israel alliance has gradually become less of a utilitarian alliance designed to advance the peace process and stabilize the region. Instead maintaining the alliance as a means of protecting Israel has more and more become an independent goal in to and of itself. (See chart on p.18 of the Introduction.) The desire to protect and secure Israel has become a goal that is to be pursued regardless of how it affects broader U.S. strategic interests in the Middle East. The result is that maintaining and strengthening the alliance in order to better secure Israel has become a goal of U.S. policy both rhetorically and in practice. Thus the U.S. strategic goal of advancing the peace process is separated, that is, compartmentalized, from the U.S. goal of protecting and securing Israel.

As Al Gore said in the 1998 speech quoted above, “It [our special relationship with Israel] does not depend on the peace process, it transcends the peace process.”⁹³ Thus the goal of the peace process is placed in one compartment while the goal of protecting Israel is placed in another compartment. Unlike the policies of Eisenhower, Ford, Carter, and George H.W. Bush by the time of the Clinton and the George W. Bush administrations, Israel’s alliance with the United States no longer depended on a mutual desire to advance the peace process. U.S. strategic interests are thus redefined in such a way that advancing the peace process is at best a secondary goal that is to be advanced, if at all, on Israel’s timeframe and on its terms. These policies which were emerging in the Clinton administration became deeply embedded in the post-9/11 neo-conservative framework adopted by the Bush/Cheney administration. Gerald Steinberg notes that “the [U.S.-Israel] strategic relationship appears to be independent of the status of the political relations [and thus], is sufficiently robust in order to ride-out short-term policy disagreements.”⁹⁴ Actually, Steinberg’s claim is perhaps too modest, the relationship appears to be able “to ride-out” long-term differences in strategic priorities as well. To use the family analogy again, the United States seems to treat Israel like a beloved petulant child, who is loved and doted on despite his/her naughty behavior. The child is praised when he/she does something positive and only lightly rebuked when it constantly

⁹³ <http://www.aipac.org/pc98/webcasts/gore0518.shtml>

⁹⁴ Steinberg, Gerald. “Israel and the United States: Can the Special Relationship Survive the New Strategic Environment?” Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA) (Volume 2, Number 4, December, 1998). Brackets added.

disobeys its loving and forgiving parent. Essentially, the child is so loved that the parent is unable or unwilling to discipline it for its own good.

The Role of Political Culture. In this context, this study is designed to demonstrate the effectiveness of using political culture to better explain the decisions of the American political elites have made foreign policy decisions about the U.S.-Israel relationship. Most political culture studies have their origins in Civic Culture, Almond and Verba's seminal 1963 five-country study of the relationship between political culture and democratic stability and participation.⁹⁵ Almond and Verba argued that America's participatory civic culture led to greater democratic stability. Almond and Verba defined the political culture of a nation as "the particular distribution of patterns of orientation toward political objects among the members of the nation."⁹⁶ Elsewhere Verba defined political culture as "the system of empirical beliefs, expressive symbols, and values which defines the situation in which political action takes place."⁹⁷ It is useful to state the postulates of the political culture approach up front and to note how these differ from those of the rational choice approach. These postulates have been summarized by Harry Eckstein as follows:

⁹⁵ Almond, Gabriel A. and Sidney Verba. The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963)

⁹⁶ Almond and Verba: The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations. 14-15.

⁹⁷ Verba, Sydney. "Comparative Political Culture." Political Culture and Political Development. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965): 513.

Actors do not respond directly to “situations” but respond to them through mediating “orientations”.... Orientations vary and are not mere subjective reflections of objective conditions.... Orientations are learned through the agency of external “socializers”.... The process can be direct...or it can occur indirectly... Although learning is regarded as continuous throughout life...early learning....is regarded as a sort of filter for later learning.... To summarize, “cultural” people process experience into action through general cognitive, affective, and evaluative predispositions; the patterns of such predispositions vary from society to society, from social segment to social segment; they do not vary because objective social situations or structures vary but because of culturally determined learning.... Orientations are not superstructural reflections of objective structures, but themselves invest structures and behaviors with cognitive and normative meaning.⁹⁸

Robert Putnam’s study, Making Democracy Work, argued by studying the differences between the political cultures of northern and southern Italy that historically-rooted political culture determined the nature and effectiveness of political institutions.⁹⁹ David Laitin’s review of Putnam suggests that his “pioneering work” has defined an entirely “renewed research program” for political science.¹⁰⁰ Still Laitin argues that one of the weaknesses of Putnam’s study is that he needs to adopt a “richer notion of culture, one built upon a Gertzian framework.... [Which] will specify more precisely than they have in the past what particular forms of culture have what impacts on outcomes.”¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Eckstein, Harry. “A Culturalist Theory of Political Change.” American Political Science Review. (Vol. 82, No. 3, September 1988): 790-792.

⁹⁹ Putnam, Robert D. (with Robert Leonardi and Raffaella Y. Nanetti) Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993)

¹⁰⁰ Laitin, David D. “The Civic Culture at 30.” American Political Science Review. (Vol. 89, no. 1, March 1995): 172, 173.

¹⁰¹ Laitin, David D. “The Civic Culture at 30.”: 173.

This study is designed to pick up the challenge offered by Laitin by adopting a richer and clearer understanding of cultural predispositions and orientations and their impact on narrow set of policy outcomes over an extended period of time.

While there are numerous ways to explain and define the essential structure and values of American political culture, it is useful to start with a general description, which will be developed further as this study progresses. Any discussion of American political development must start with an understanding of America's exceptional political development and the manner in which it has affected its foreign policy. It has often been noted that unlike most countries America is as much an idea as physical place. Richard Payne notes that:

To a much greater extent than most other countries, the United States is not just a geographic entity; it is an ideology or a set of beliefs. The dominant culture, which embodies that creed, profoundly affects the content of foreign policy, and directly and significantly shapes responses to international problems. Public discourse, policy debates, all the abstract analytical models, and various methods of solving problems are ultimately anchored in the "American Way." The relative newness of the United States as a nation, its isolation from European quarrels, its endemic provincialism, its unmatched racial and ethnic diversity, and the fact that the country was founded as a set of beliefs have elevated historical experiences and ideology to a prominent role in foreign policymaking. In many cases, culture, the means by which such a vast and often rootless society has the means by which such as vast and often rootless society has managed to retain its identity and global leadership, has been one of the most important determinants of foreign activities or the lack of them.¹⁰²

¹⁰² Payne, Richard. The Clash with Distant Cultures: Values, Interests, and Force in American Foreign Policy. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995): 2.

Within this exceptional framework, Daniel Franklin concisely describes the central values of that American ideology, or “American way” as the:

...More or less shared notions of individualism, equality, meritocracy, and a belief in democracy and the free market. What draws Americans together is a common immigrant experience.¹⁰³

As will be explained below, this study is premised on examining a series of changes in political orientations that have occurred within American culture over the last several decades. These changes have not affected the basic values of American political culture as much as they have changed the way in which the public and policy-makers interpret and apply those cultural values to their thinking about the Middle East. Thus the changes occurring within a broad framework of overall cultural continuity serve as this study’s independent variable. Whereas the political culture studies described above examined broad institutional issues, this one is designed to explain the relationship between changes in the interpretation of the political culture and a relatively narrow dependent variable -- the decisions of political elites about the development, maintenance, and consolidation of the American “special relationship” with the State of Israel, with a particular focus to evolution after the 1967 Six-Day War.

From what has been described in the preceding discussion, it is clear that mono-causal explanations do not do much to elucidate the behavior of the American political elite as regards the U.S.-Israel “special relationship.” Since the American political elite’s

¹⁰³ Franklin, Daniel P. “American Political Culture and Constitutionalism.” Political Culture and Constitutionalism: A Comparative Approach. (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1995)

behavior can not be fully explained as acting in the country's strategic interests, nor can it be completely explained as having been "bribed" by campaign contributors, we must consider why this group has adopted the policies that it has. Ultimately, it will prove useful to view both strategic interests and domestic political contributions, not as independent variables, but rather as intervening variables that are best viewed through the lenses of political culture. Anthony Rusonik summarizes the problem with the literature on the "special relationship" as follows:

Both the pro-Israel and the pro-Arab advocacy literatures in the United States tend to be transparently partisan and to do scholarship a disservice. If the pro-Israel camp overestimates Israel's strategic value to the United States as an explanation of US support, while the pro-Arab camp exaggerates the influence of the Israel lobby over decisionmakers, the true sources of US support for Israel may lie in moral factors.¹⁰⁴

Most studies of these issues do not examine the array of cultural "soft" factors that under gird the effectiveness of the American Jewish lobby in strengthening the "special relationship." Nor do they address how changes in the interpretation of American culture have often unintentionally served to preserve and strengthen the alliance even after the strategic rationale upon which it was originally premised has mostly dissolved. The result has been that the strategic framework and rationale have become a rationalization for a deeper and more complicated cultural explanation that is harder for politicians and academics to both understand and articulate to their various constituencies. This analysis suggests that both the understanding of Israel as a strategic

¹⁰⁴ Rusonik, Anthony. "On the West Bank of the Potomac: Debating the Sources of US Support for Israel." The Jerusalem Journal of International Relations. (Vol. 12, No. 4, 1990): 29.

asset and the influence of the pro-Israel lobby have in fact evolved as products of the cultural connection between the two societies. The survival and security of Israel has become a positive value, in and of itself, of American foreign policy rather than a means of accomplishing a specific strategic end for the United States. The sympathetic treatment that the pro-Israel lobby receives has become an extension of Israel's favored place in America's moral lexicon.

Shifting Elite Culture. Since elites, by definition, are more powerful than the mass public, it worthwhile to try to extrapolate how it is that a democratic public is able to influence decisions made by political elites. Robert Putnam suggests four methods by which the mass public can affect the decisions of democratic elites.¹⁰⁵ Each of these four methods is helpful for understanding the process by which the relationship between the mass public and the elites are conceptualized in this project.

First, Putnam argues that “the elite may be like the non-elite in crucial respects.”¹⁰⁶ This argument suggests that on some issues similarities between the background the elites and the mass public may lead the elites to advocate the policies that the public believes in. This argument is somewhat limited by the fact that all kinds of studies have shown that political elites are better educated, wealthier, more likely to be male, and less likely

¹⁰⁵ Putnam, Robert. The Comparative Study of Political Elites (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1976): 140-164. The four thesis statements in the next section are from Putnam: 140.

¹⁰⁶ Putnam discusses this in The Comparative Study: pages 141-143. For some inexplicable reason Putnam chooses to use the non-standard spelling “non-elite” rather than “non-elite.” This author will use his spelling only in direct quotes.

to belong to a racial minority than the general public. Nevertheless, political elites often share many of same basic values as the mass public. Both elites and the public are receptive to many of the same cultural stimuli. Research has shown, for example, that in the United States both elites and the general public overwhelmingly support American Constitutional system. There is a shared consensus on democratic rights such as free speech, free press, and freedom of religion.¹⁰⁷ Elites and non-elites in the United States share a common belief in the capitalist system. In addition both groups generally share similar understandings of many events in American history and a common commitment to a shared “Judeo-Christian” heritage. In terms of entertainment, elites and the mass public may often watch many of the same TV programs, watch the same movies, and read the same bestsellers. They have often been educated in much the same way with similar textbooks. They read (or more likely watch) much of the same news programming. News events are often reported similarly in both the elite and more regional press who may rely on the same news services. Still, these similarities in background can only account for part of the reason that elites are responsive to the general public. The gap narrows even more when one focuses on the voting public, which is more middle class and better educated than the general public as a whole. As McClosky notes, the opinions of elites and non-elites tend to be closer in the abstract than

¹⁰⁷ McClosky, Hebert. “Consensus and Ideology in American Politics.” American Political Science Review. (Vol. LVIII, No. 2, June, 1964): 365-366, especially Table II. McCloskey defines the term “consensus” as support of 75% of the population. He notes that this is an arbitrary definition, but a logical one since it is halfway between majority and unanimity. McCloskey: 363.

when these principles are applied to specific issues and problems.¹⁰⁸ As Dahl notes, it is the “common tendency of mankind ...to qualify universals in application while leaving them intact in rhetoric.”¹⁰⁹ In any case, while this extent of value congruence does not, in Putnam’s words, “actually involve the mass influence on elites,” it sets the stage for the other mechanisms described below. Without some sense of a shared background and values, all of the other mechanisms by which mass public influences elites could not function effectively. In the context of the views of the U.S.-Israel alliance and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there is widespread continuity between elite and non-elite views of the world helps to explain the high level of support for Israel and Israeli policies both among the mass public and the policy-making elite. Broadly speaking, elites and non-elites share many of the same values when it comes to their view of Israel, the Middle East, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Putnam’s second method by which non-elites affect elites is that the “support from the non-elite may be an important resource or credential for members of the elite.”¹¹⁰ Here he is discussing primarily the need for elected political elites to garner the votes of the citizens to promote their own electoral ambitions. Putnam notes that, “political

¹⁰⁸ McClosky. “Consensus and Ideology.” 366. McClosky argues that elites tend to stay closer to their abstract principles while the general public is more likely to qualify the abstract principle in practice.

¹⁰⁹ Dahl, Robert A. Who Governs: Democracy and Power in an American City. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1961): 319.

¹¹⁰ Putnam discusses this in The Comparative Study: 143-154.

ambition is associated with heightened sensitivity to voters' wishes."¹¹¹ This is clearly the case in this case where the political elites need votes and contributions from supporters of Israel in order to continue to advance their political ambitions. Even if the Jewish community doesn't have the resources to end a politician's career they can make it much more difficult through active opposition of a well-organized political savvy voting bloc that is willing to loudly raise questions that can undermine a politician's credibility and judgment. Conflict-adverse politicians are often willing to pursue the path of least resistance and adopt the position of potential cantankerous interest group.

Putnam's third method is that non-elites may affect elites because "Influential intermediary groups or institutions may link elites and non-elites."¹¹² Putnam discusses the role of political parties, interest groups and patron-client networks. Patron-client networks are an extensive part of the process through which politicians raise money to support their politician campaigns. Putnam notes that there is downward flow of ideas and influence from the elite to the masses as well as reverse information flow via the members of the "attentive public" who act as intermediaries.¹¹³ Some examples of how this process has influenced the "special relationship" especially within the Democratic Party.

¹¹¹ Putnam. The Comparative Study: 144.

¹¹² Putnam discusses this in The Comparative Study: 154-160.

¹¹³ Putnam. The Comparative Study: 159-160.

Both major American political parties take strongly pro-Israel positions for political reasons explained below. The parties serve as mechanisms to transmit pro-Israel images held by the rank-and-file up to the party leaders. Interestingly enough, this means that the leaders of the two parties will tend to receive different images of Israel. The strongest pro-Israel constituencies within the Republican Party are to be found among philo-Semitic Christian groups, Veteran's groups, and economically conservative Jews. The former transmits images of Israel as the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy and an extension of Judeo-Christian values. Veteran's groups tend to see Israel as a key military ally in the Middle East. While political conservative Jews are likely to focus on Israel's increasingly capitalistic hi-tech economy. On the other hand, the Democratic Party is more closely tied to the larger more liberal segment of the Jewish population. This group is likely to emphasize images of Israel as a liberal democracy and a haven for Jewish refugees. Both Jewish constituencies also emphasize the image of Israel as a strategic asset to the United States. This helps to account for the somewhat different tone of sympathy within the two parties and the continued emphasis of both on Israel's strategic importance. (The role of political parties will be discussed further in Chapter 6.)

Most importantly for this study is the role of special interest lobbies. As noted earlier, the lobbies (or at least PACs) serve a role of collecting and distributing donations to those who are sympathetic with their positions. However, they also serve another role that is, for our purposes, far more important. They create an intellectual climate in which donors feel comfortable in giving to their cause and recipients feel comfortable receiving donations. They try to show both their donors, as well as the broader public, that the

policies they advocate are not just good for their “special” interest, but that these policies also serve the broader “national” interest and conform to America’s most sacred and fundamental values. It is much easier for legislators and policy elites to defend a “special interest” policy if they can at least rationalize that the policy in question both serves the national interest and conforms to the nation’s core values.

Some recent examples of how some domestic lobbies do much the same thing may be illustrative. The National Rifle Association (NRA) does not frame its public campaign as merely the defense of the rights of its members (gun owners) or a defense of the interest of gun manufactures. The NRA argues that its policies are part of an effort to defend the basic American values of individual liberty and smaller government. The NRA also frames its argument as a defense of “the right of the people to keep and bear Arms” as stated in the Second Amendment to the United States Constitution; and thus appeals to the American faith in the U.S. Constitution. Thus the right to carry a machine gun becomes a defense of the American Constitutional system. In 1998, the tobacco lobby executed a successful campaign to defeat the tobacco settlement by arguing that the legislation conflicted with the fundamental American values such as small government and low taxes. The insurance lobby used a similar argument to defeat President Clinton’s health care legislation in 1994. Both of these groups understood the essential American distrust of big government and bureaucracies. The National Education Association, which is a union representing many teachers, tries to frame its policy proposals as defenses of America’s children. After all, almost everyone cares about the future of the nation’s (or at least their own) children. Environmental groups, such as the Sierra Club

and the Environmental Defense Fund, argue that their legislation priorities -- such as the Endangered Species Act -- are good for everybody, because they are protecting the natural environment as a universal (as well as an American) value. The American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars link support of Veterans benefits to patriotism. The Christian Coalition explicitly argues that they are the defenders of the country's "Christian" (or sometimes "Judeo-Christian") values.

In the context of our present discussion, the pro-Israel lobby has linked America's "special relationship" with Israel to a variety of American values and ideals that will be described extensively below. Lobbies are thus able to provide a key link between the public and political elites. One of the primary roles of any successful lobby is to create an intellectual climate in which the mass public believes that the "special interest" policies that they advocate are congruent with the "national interest" and the nation's values. By framing their policies in this way, they create an intellectual climate in which the public does not object to policies that favor a "special interest" group and the politicians can justify spending taxpayer dollars for a "special interest." Thus the lobby creates a moral argument that their policies conform with and reinforces consensus values of the American people. The lobby does not change the political culture so much as it positions the policies that it supports within the political culture and attaches them to consensus values.

In other words, the lobby and its friends and supporters interpret the policy implications of the political culture for the public and the policymakers. Over time, they

also adjust the placement and the positioning of their ideas as new issues and social trends arise. The great success of the pro-Israel lobby and its supporters is not in raising money from supporters of Israel, but in interpreting American political culture so that it is relatively easy to raise, and effectively distribute money in manner that can effectively influence American policy towards Israel. (We will explore the role of the Jewish community and the pro-Israel Lobby further in Chapter 7.)

Putnam fourth and final means through which the public can affect is that, “Members of the elite may believe they ought to be responsive to the needs and wishes of the non-elite.”¹¹⁴ Most political elites have a psychological need to believe that their leadership is based on moral right and not merely on a cynical *quid pro quo*. In order to do so, they need to believe that they are articulating the legitimate values of their constituents. Thus while they accept money from “special interests” most politicians convince themselves that their votes and decisions are made in the “national interest.” The lobbies have a need to convince themselves that their policies are in the best interests of the American people and the politicians have a psychological need to believe that the policies that they follow are in the interest of their constituents. Thus both the lobbyists and politicians want to believe that they are working for the greater good rather than for strictly parochial interests. Policy advocates and the politicians are able to work together to forge an elite-mass consensus in which their ideas (and their contributions) are at least in their own minds congruent with the nation’s values and ideals.

¹¹⁴ Putnam discusses this in The Comparative Study: 160-162.

The U.S.-Israel “special relationship” is an almost ideal example of this process at work. The lobbies, political parties, members of the media, and other opinion leaders have created positive images of Israel and linked these in public psyche to core values within American political culture. Thus the public’s understanding of its “national interest” is adapted so that it coincides with that of the “special interests.” It should be noted that such efforts rarely express attempts to conspire to deceive the mass public, only to educate others in a democratic manner about what they themselves believe is in the “national interest.” Indeed, much of the process described is uncoordinated and reflects the acts of individuals who share a broad set of goals, values, and beliefs and seek to use their country’s political system to achieve goals that they deeply believe in and are deeply committed to. Thus since elites are usually committed to the approach that they ought to be responsive to the beliefs and values of the larger public that they represent they often absorb the values of the mass public as part of the framework for their policy decisions. They are more likely to articulate the views of those segments of the larger public that are most outspoken and articulate. When it comes to Middle East policy, they hear most clearly and most often from representatives of the Jewish community and tend to reflect those views in their policymaking.

The beginnings of the U.S.-Israel alliance was initially established during the late Eisenhower/early Kennedy administration, strengthened under President Johnson and developed into a major axis of American Middle East policy during the Nixon administration primarily for strategic reasons. As time went on, campaign contributions became a primary motivation for politicians -- particularly members of Congress -- to

adopt policies supportive of Israeli actions. However, since neither strategic interests nor skilled lobbying can fully explain the pattern of executive decision-making in the U.S.-Israel relationship. The hypothesis proposed here is that a comprehensive explanation requires considering the degree to which the American public (and through them the American political elite) perceive themselves as sharing a common set of political, cultural, and religious values with Israelis. The entire structure of the relationship is in reality built on this perceived set of shared cultural values. As Israeli scholar Gabriel Sheffer perceptively writes:

A special interpretation is needed to explain this incomparably special position [the U.S.-Israel relationship], since most conventional interpretations are at best only partially applicable. Such interpretations tend to focus on common national or strategic interests between patron and client.... In this case, however, none of these interpretations seem sufficient.... The answer may lie in shared values of the two countries -- that is, *various soft and intangible factors* that serve to influence the U.S. administration in favor of Israel....¹¹⁵

Camille Mansour reaches a similar conclusion in Beyond Alliance, his study of the “special relationship.”¹¹⁶ Mansour’s study is probably the most thoroughly researched, carefully documented, non-polemical research on this subject to date. After carefully exploring several alternative explanations on their own terms and rejecting them as incomplete, Mansour concludes that “The mutual identification of the United States and

¹¹⁵ Sheffer, Gabriel. “Introduction: Shared Values as the Basis for the U.S.-Israel ‘Special Relationship,’” Dynamics of Dependence: U.S.-Israeli Relationship. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987): 2, 4. Italics added.

¹¹⁶ Mansour, Camille. Beyond Alliance: Israel in U.S. Foreign Policy. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.)

Israel involves on the one hand, a perception in American society of the place of the Jewish community within it and is related, on the other hand, to the ideological and cultural basis of the American attitude toward the state of Israel.”¹¹⁷ Let us now consider the images through which Americans perceive Israel which serve as the framework for American policy towards Israel.

Sheffer and Hofnung have identified several positive images of Israel within American society that form the basis for a shared set of ideological and cultural values. They describe images of Israel as a pioneering democracy, a Jewish refuge, a leading opponent of terrorism, and a scientific, economic, strategic, and military partner of the United States.¹¹⁸ All of these popular images allow Americans to relate to and empathize with Israel and its citizens. Let us briefly consider each of these images as well as a few that these authors have overlooked.

Images of Israel and Closely Related Values in American Political Culture

Images of Israel

Pioneering image

Democratic image

Underdog image

American Values

Frontier spirit; rejection of the “Old World”;
Sympathy for pioneering; Belief in
“manifest destiny”

Attachment to democracy; liberalism;
Constitutional liberties - freedom of speech,
press

Sympathy for the weak; David vs. Goliath

¹¹⁷ Mansour: 260.

¹¹⁸ Sheffer, Gabriel and Menachem Hofnung. “Israel’s Image.” Dynamics of Dependence: U.S.-Israeli Relationship. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987): 14-20.

Image of Successful Underdog	Protestant work ethic; American Dream
Image of friend and partner	Western values; capitalism; racial sympathy
Image Humanitarian refuge	Freedom of religion; freedom of Immigration;
Biblical Image	Shared Judeo-Christian heritage; Exodus story; Belief in a Chosen people

All of the images presented above are to be understood as images that the American public -- and particularly the more politically active and broadly middle class elements of the public -- holds of Israel. Such images that are held by the public as a whole are often highly superficial and incomplete depictions of reality. Indeed images are, by definition, simplifications of political reality. Throughout the discussion below some of the flaws in the images are brought out, but no attempt has been made to fully demonstrate the inaccuracies within them as compared to an objective political reality -- if such a thing can even be defined. The point rather is to attempt to explain those images that exist in the mind of the public and ultimately the policymaking elites. The American public is both woefully uninformed about, and basically uninterested in, the Middle East and thus quite willing to accept the images of faraway places that are presented by politicians, the media, and mass popular culture. Thus, most of the public accepts these popular images of Israel relatively uncritically.

Israel as a “Pioneering Democracy.” Sheffer and Hofnung’s first image of Israel is that of a “pioneering democracy.” This image actually seems to draw on several distinctive elements of American political culture that are best discussed separately. The

image of Israel as a nation of pioneers is both a fairly accurate description of parts of the early Zionist experience and a carefully maintained image. The image of Israelis as brave pioneers who escaped from hardships and persecution of Europe to settle a land that was given to them by God -- a sort of Middle Eastern “manifest destiny” -- resonates with Americans. The pioneering image evokes America’s own sense of its own romanticized pioneering exploring the frontier. In the 1960s, John F. Kennedy spoke glowingly of the need for Americans to open up the new frontier of space and Americans enthusiastically supported the daring effort to place a man on the moon. It was a way in which a new generation of Americans could vicariously explore a new frontier where a physical one no longer existed. Today, the same metaphor of “new frontiers” is often used in reference to developing new forms of technology.

Early Zionist settlers in the *Yishuv* (Zionist settlements in pre-state Palestine) fled religious persecution in a spirit not unlike the pilgrims and other early American settlers who fled from religious persecution in Europe. The romanticized image of the Israelis *kibbutzniks* settling the land seemed to parallel that of the early American pioneers who settled much of what became the United States. Sheffer and Hofnung note that in the early years of Israeli statehood, “the most widespread image of Israel was that of a frontier state struggling to establish its borders and develop its newly acquired territory.”¹¹⁹ This image was actively promoted and indeed glorified in American culture by books and movies such as Exodus. This book and its dramatic movie adaptation --

¹¹⁹ Sheffer and Hofnung: 14.

starring Paul Newman as the heroic Ari Ben-Canaan -- presented many sympathetic images of the Zionist struggle (and mostly, although not entirely, unsympathetic images of Israel's Arab antagonists). One observer noted that Exodus "accomplished the feat of supplying the world's Jews overnight with contemporary cowboy ancestors."¹²⁰ By associating with young Israeli state, Americans could similarly take part in the vicarious construction of new state, which in many ways harkened back to their own national development. In a sense, Israel's pioneering experience can be understood as an extension of America's desire to discover new frontiers to explore, settle, and develop. Americans can relate to the settling of the land, the hardships experienced by immigrants, and the difficulties pioneers faced in dealing with the "natives." These are all parts of the American experience and they find a familiar and reassuring echo in the Israelis experience. It may also help explain why many Americans (and secular Israelis for that matter) initially felt a certain sense of kinship with Israeli settlers building settlements on Israel "new frontier" of the West Bank and Gaza Strip after the 1967 War. Israeli settlements of the West Bank (often referred to by its ancient geographic names as "Judea" and "Samaria") seemed to hearken back to a romantic sense of a nation fulfilling its God-given "manifest destiny."

The subjugation of the "natives" was a part of the narrative epic, which has long been rationalized as a necessary part of the fulfillment of America's "manifest destiny."

¹²⁰ Stembler, Charles Herbert and Others. Jews in the Mind of America. (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1966): 195. Stembler offers this quote in footnote 2, but doesn't identify the observer.

While revisionist historical accounts have begun to describe the American conquest of the continent in terms of colonialism and genocide, most Americans still have not fully absorbed the darker side of their national narrative. Historically, Native Americans were viewed as an “uncivilized” and not fully human. They were seen as posing a threat to the advance of American civilization in general and particularly to American women and children. These images have been reinforced in literally dozens of American Westerns. Thus use of violence against the “natives” has long been viewed as justified, defensive, and often heroic. Although most Americans think of their nation as peaceful, concepts of force and violence are deeply imbedded and often glorified within American culture. This historical experience and view of violence allows Americans to easily accept that the view that the native peoples of Palestine posed a similar threat to the early Zionist settlers and later the youthful Jewish state. The natural sympathies of Americans were with the “civilized” European settlers who left their native land to settle, build up, and carved a new homeland out of the wilderness rather than the “less civilized” displaced native peoples. The similarities of Israel’s pioneering narrative allowed Americans to sympathize with Israelis and disregard Palestinians. The association with the Israeli narrative has allowed Americans to reinforce their own belief in the justice of their narrative and helps to displace any lingering doubts about their own history. By contrast, empathizing with the Palestinian narrative might open up Americans to exploring the skeletons in their own historical closets that they’d prefer not to explore.¹²¹

¹²¹ Rogin, Michael. Ronald Reagan, the Movie and Other Episodes in Political Demonology. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987). This whole volume

Indeed the dark side of the pioneering myth was its justification of the use of force and violence. In American history, the use of violence might have been regrettable, but it has been relatively easy to justify as a necessary evil if there was a threat to national priorities. Richard Payne argues that:

Although most countries have been shaped by violence, to greater or lesser degrees, the United States was the first modern nation to obtain its independence through revolution. Violence therefore became an integral component of nation-building and under girds America's self-definition. Almost every major aspect of political, social, and economic development in the United States was accompanied by officially sanctioned, as well as unofficial, violence. Expanding westward, maintaining slavery, preserving national unity, emancipating enslaved Africans, and securing various political, social, and economic freedoms were accomplished through force. If violence is generally viewed as the lifeblood of freedom in democratic societies, that idea has been constantly rejuvenated in the United States and maintains a potency that is rare elsewhere.¹²²

Given an American context where the use of violence is widely rationalized by the state as necessary and defensive, it is easy to understand why many Americans could easily accept the Israeli argument that use of violence in the Occupied Territories is always defensive or necessary in order to preserve national security. Indeed, Israeli use of violence has long been seen in romantic and positive terms. As one scholar notes

is useful, but p. 45-51 and Chapter 5 directly addresses what Rogin calls the "Indian Question." See also Payne: 32-34.

¹²² Payne, Richard. The Clash with Distant Cultures: Values, Interests, and Force in American Foreign Policy. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995): 47.

aforementioned Exodus was “responsible for creating the noble *sabra* myth of Israel as a nation of handsome, morally upright warriors and dark-haired, lusty beauties.”¹²³

The pioneering image has generally been quite enduring in America’s consciousness. Raising serious questions about Israel’s use of violence in any given situation would raise implicit questions about America’s use of violence in analogous situations. Accepting Israel’s explanation for the use of violence reinforces America’s own rationalization about the use of violence throughout much of American history.

Since the U.S. lacks a single predominant ethnic group, American identity has been closely connected to its Constitutional system and democratic ideals. Americans perceive Israel as the only stable democracy in the Middle East.¹²⁴ Israel has maintained a functional, if at times chaotic, parliamentary system with a free and open press in region known for autocratic regimes.¹²⁵ Sheffer and Hofnung note that, “pro-Israel groups stress

¹²³ Kaplan, Robert D. The Arabists: The Romance of an American Elite. (New York: The Free Press, 1993): 254. The word *sabra* is a common Hebrew term for Israeli-born Jews that refers to a type of Israel fruit that is hard on the outside and soft on the inside.

¹²⁴ A good case could be made that Turkey is a stable democracy. Iran has some features of an electoral democracy within a theocratic structure. A number of other Arab states such as Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt have some history of electoral politics. Israel is probably the most stable in terms of electoral democracy and civil liberties at least within Israel proper; the Occupied Territories are, of course, more problematic.

¹²⁵ Some scholars have described Israel as more of a procedural democracy than a liberal democracy. However, this subtle distinction is generally lost on the public at large.

the contrast between Israel and the non-democratic Arab states.”¹²⁶ Israel’s election of a woman, Golda Meir, as prime minister in the early 1970s enhanced Israel’s image as a free open democratic society. Her election played into the American belief in equality during the heyday of the Women’s rights movement at time when very few women had served as heads of elected Democratic governments.¹²⁷ Golda Meir still ranks highly among the American survey of well-known Israelis. Page and Shapiro bring in the economic element, noting that, “most Americans came to feel a cultural and political identification with... [Israel as a] largely European, democratic, and capitalistic outpost of Western values.”¹²⁸ Israel, while founded on a socialist basis, has gradually moved towards a more deregulated American-style capitalistic economy. This plays into the American faith in the free-market system.

Sheffer and Hofnung also note that there are some negative and ambivalent images of Israel that stem primarily from policies of the Israeli government. They point to a series of related images of Israel as “an occupying power,” a violator of human

¹²⁶ Sheffer and Hofnung: 14-15.

¹²⁷ Golda Meir succeeded to the Prime Minister’s office after Levi Eshkol’s death in 1969. Indira Gandhi was elected Prime Minister of India in 1966. Her father, Jawaharlal Nehru, had been India’s founding Prime Minister. Isabel Peron succeeded her husband as President of Argentina in 1974. Meir is the only one of these three who was coming to power on her own without being the successor to a male relative.

¹²⁸ Page, Benjamin and Robert Shapiro. The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in American=s Policy Preferences. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992): 251. The capitalistic element of this quote is a bit ironic since Israel was founded and run for its first three decades by a socialist party. However, given the superficiality of these images, it is unlikely that most Americans would be aware of this fact. The ethnic/racial element of this quote will be discussed further below.

rights, a “supporter of reactionary regimes,” and as being intransigent in the peace process.¹²⁹ Israel’s democratic image has become a bit frayed since the beginning of Palestinian *Intifada* (Uprising or more literally “shaking off” in Arabic) in 1987 which has increased the focus on Israeli violations of the rights of Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories. The adoption of hawkish policies of settlement expansion and political intransigence by various Israeli governments over the last quarter century has undermined Israel’s image as a democracy. More recently, reports of non-Orthodox Jews being denied full religious rights may have also affected this image. While reports of Israeli human rights violations have weakened Israel’s democratic credentials, they have not significantly undermined its overall democratic image -- especially as compared to its far more autocratic antagonists in the region. While this image belies many other difficulties in Israeli society, it has provided a positive link between the two societies that continues to strengthen the “special relationship.” American political leaders continue to laud the democratic nature of Israeli society. For example, Vice-President Gore remarked in 1998 that “the Jewish love of justice has built a powerful democracy.”¹³⁰

House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-MO) stated that:

This [United States] is a nation conceived in liberty. This is a nation that has a Declaration of Independence that said that all people are created equal; endowed by their Creator with certain liberties -- life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Israel also is a democracy based on those ideals. And today we celebrate 50 years of democracy in a part of the world that

¹²⁹ Sheffer and Hofnung: 26-28, 30-31.

¹³⁰ AIAPC Policy Conference, Washington, D.C., May 18, 1998.
<http://www.aipac.org/pc98/webcasts/gore0518.shtml>

has very little democracy. We thank Israel for preserving those principles.¹³¹

As noted above, the belief in the abstract principles of democracy, equality and the free market are essential elements of American identity. The Constitution is a sacred document within America's civil religion which enshrines America's democratic principles. The religious dimensions of these principles were further expanded during the Cold War. The Cold War was widely viewed by most Americans as a Manichean struggle between the forces of light (the democratic West) and the forces of darkness (the atheistic communism). Israel's self-defined role as a beacon of democracy in an authoritarian region reinforced the American belief that it was succeeding in its Cold War struggle and therefore served to further strengthen the political-cultural bond between the two countries. The importance of America's belief in democracy as the best form of government has not waned in Post-Cold War period, thus neither has this bond. In fact, in the Post 9/11 era, the Bush administration has reemphasized its commitment, not only to American democracy, but to bringing democracy to the rest of the world. In his Second Inaugural Address on January 20, 2005 President Bush argued that:

America's vital interests and our deepest beliefs are now one. From the day of our Founding, we have proclaimed that every man and woman on this earth has rights, and dignity, and matchless value, because they bear the image of the Maker of Heaven and earth. Across the generations we have proclaimed the imperative of self-government, because no one is fit to be a master, and no one deserves to be a slave. Advancing these ideals is the mission that created our Nation. It is the honorable achievement of our fathers. Now it is the urgent requirement of our nation's security, and the calling of our time. So it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic

¹³¹ AIPAC Policy Conference, Washington, D.C., May 19, 1998.
<http://www.aipac.org/pc98/webcasts/geph0519.shtml>. Brackets added.

movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world.¹³²

The Bush administration's rhetoric defines the task of bringing democracy to the rest of the world as being an act of enlightened self-interest, but also at a deeper level suggests that it is part of America's sacred religious mission or "calling." Clearly this sort of language is suggestive of the reasons underlying American's special commitment to Israel as the "the only democracy in the Middle East."

Israel as an Underdog. The image of Israel as "pioneering democracy" is closely interrelated what we will call the "underdog" image of Israel. This is the image of Israel as weak, struggling underdog fighting against great odds for its survival against much more powerful forces that are dedicated to its destruction. In this image, Israel is seen as a young immature nation in need of assistance until it can grow up and become mature member of the community of nations. Writing about the crisis that led up to the 1967 war, Eytan Gilboa credits Israel's image as an underdog as a major reason that Americans sympathized with Israel. He writes that "during the crisis that preceded the war there was real fear -- both in Israel and abroad -- that the Arabs might succeed this time in their attempt to annihilate the Jewish state."¹³³ Israel was seen as being the Biblical David trying to overcome a massive Arab Goliath. (This leads into the concept of Biblical imagery, which will be discussed further below.) Today, despite Israel's military successes, the grisly menace of terrorism -- this ironically is the weapon that the weak use against the strong -- continues to evoke the image of Israel as vulnerable and

¹³² <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/01/20050120-1.html>

¹³³ Gilboa, Eytan. "Trends in American Attitudes toward Israel." Dynamics of Dependence: U.S.-Israeli Relations. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987): 48.

endangered. Those who wish to emphasize this image often emphasize Israel small physical size, while downplaying its position as the dominant regional military power. Former Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott's remarks a few years ago are a good example of this kind of imagery. The Republican Senator observed that:

I had the occasion a few years ago to go to Israel....And it was a transforming experience for me, because I realized how small Israel really is. I realized how quickly an enemy can cross that small, narrow band and strike any part of Israel. I learned to appreciate the significance of the Golan Heights it would be if we turned them over to enemies where they could do whatever they chose.¹³⁴

In recent years, the combination of renewed terrorist attacks during the Second *Intifada*, the election of the Palestinian militant group Hamas to a majority in the Palestinian parliament (January, 2006), and the bellicose rhetoric of Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad -- particularly his statement that he would "wipe Israel off the map" -- have reinforced the mostly incorrect impression that Israel faces existential threat to its survival. Israel has been able to use the perception of its own perceived weakness and vulnerability as a pretext for taking extraordinary efforts in defense of its own broadly-defined security interests.

At least under certain circumstances, Americans seems to sympathize with those who are weak and defenseless. While this is obviously not always true and "weakness" is clearly a subjective category, the perception of Israel as weak, young, and needy has reinforced the relationship. The constant emphasis on Israel as a young state in the

¹³⁴ AIPAC Policy Conference, Washington, D.C., May 19, 1998.
<http://www.aipac.org/pc98/webcasts/lott0519.shtml>

political discourse seems to reinforce this sense of Israel's youthfulness, weakness, and need for protection. Perhaps this empathy arises from America's own sense of itself as a relatively youthful state which was always fighting for its survival first against the older more established states of Europe and more recently against the dangers of Fascism and Communism. America has often seen itself as an underdog (even when it has become the wealthiest and best armed country in the world) and thus can empathize with Israel's sense of itself as an underdog.

Israel's victory in the 1967 war began a shift of the conflict from one between Arabs and Israelis to one between Israelis and Palestinians -- who lived in the territories that Israel has occupied since that war. After 1987, the First Palestinian *Intifada* seemed to complete the shift as the TV networks began to transmit images of heavily-armed Israeli "Goliaths" shooting Palestinian "Davids" armed only with stones. The combination of Israel's successful economic and military strength -- which have turned it into a regional military and economic power -- has undercut, but hardly erased, the image of Israel as a weak, small, youthful, pioneering underdog; however, as these images have partially, but by no means fully, faded out they have been replaced by other images that are just as positive and sympathetic.

The image of Israel as an underdog that has overcome hardships and succeeded against great odds is inevitably connected to American perceptions of the success and achievements of American Jews. If the American Dream of economic success and cultural integration are the overriding paradigm of American life, then American Jews

have emerged as a group that is emblematic of the possibility of achieving that dream. Jews have developed an image/stereotype as “educated,” “wealthy,” and “successful.” The American public seems to admire hard work -- a value ironically associated with the Max Weber’s “protestant work ethic”¹³⁵ -- and success. American Jews are seen as exemplars of American meritocracy. These images are enhanced by the economic achievements of American Jews and the economic and military successes of the State of Israel. Of course, this may be a double-edged sword, because economic success has often produced resentment against Jews. These images are closely related to anti-Semitic stereotypes of Jews possessing power and wealth -- as portrayed in the infamous Protocols of the Elders of Zion. (See below for a discussion of the decline of anti-Semitism in Chapter 3.) Indeed, the idea of Jews having great power seemed patently absurd after the revelations of the Holocaust.¹³⁶ Nevertheless, some remnants of these stereotypes still proliferate on the left and right fringes of the American political spectrum.

Yet another interrelated interpretation is that Israel’s successes in its numerous wars present a stronger, more macho, picture of Jews than some of the stereotypes still associated with their American cousins. Indeed, American literature and films have often

¹³⁵ Weber, Max. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1958)

¹³⁶ Since the Holocaust demonstrates how Jews have been persecuted and lacked power, so-called “Holocaust Revisionists” (really Holocaust deniers) try to deny that the Holocaust ever took place. This is the only way for these anti-Semitic groups to preserve the myth of Jewish great power.

portrayed American Jews as a weak, wealthy, neurotic people typically seen in Woody Allen films and Philip Roth novels. Thus the American public may have adopted some of the stereotypes common in Israel that view Israeli Jews more positively in contrast to some of the images of the rather negative stereotypes that they hold about American Jews as “weak” and “powerless.” An important component of this is that almost all healthy secular Israeli Jews serve in the Israel Defense Forces while the vast majority of American Jews do not participate in any form of military service. Oz Almog in describing the development of Israeli identity writes that “the repudiation of the Diaspora and the Diaspora way of life, and especially the stereotyping of the Diaspora Jew, indirectly sharpened the boundaries of the Zionist national religion and stressed its superiority over traditional Jewish religion.”¹³⁷

Israel as Stable Ally, Partner, and Refuge. The image of Israel as a stable ally in an unfriendly part of the world has also been part of the concept of Israel in the American mind. The strong and continuing links between the American Jewish community and the state of Israel have served to promote and perpetuate the image of Israel as friendly ally. This was enhanced further by the grandmotherly image of the aforementioned Golda Meir -- who grew up in the Midwest,¹³⁸ not the Mid East. In 1982, a TV miniseries, A Woman Called Golda, starring the beloved Ingrid Bergman (in her

¹³⁷ Almog, Oz. The Sabra: The Creation of the New Jew. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000): 76.

¹³⁸ Golda Meir grew and graduated from high school in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, although she was born in the Ukraine. Meir’s grandmotherly image belied a very tough and often ruthless politician.

final role) cemented her image as the American grandmother who became an international leader. This is further enhanced by the former Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, who grew up, went to college, and started a career in the United States, and speaks English like a telegenic American politician without any trace of a foreign accent.

The elements of stability and friendliness were particularly important during the Cold War context. Speaking again of the 1967 war, Gilboa notes that:

Israel's swift and decisive defeat of three armies was seen [by Americans] not only as a dramatic victory but an American gain as well, since both Egypt and Syria were close allies of the Soviet Union and their defeat was interpreted as a major blow to the Kremlin's prestige in the region. This blow was all the more important in view of the concomitant American failures in Vietnam and the psychological need of Americans to identify with a winning cause.¹³⁹

Both sides in the Cold War viewed the conflict as a Manichean struggle between good and evil. Americans saw Israel as one of the "good guys." While anti-Western third world nationalist movements were often seen as the "bad guys" – as was the case in America's war in Vietnam. Even after the Cold War, this image has remained although the definition of who the "bad guy" is has now become far more ambiguous. In the early years of the Cold War, Israel was viewed as a natural ally against Arab nationalism --

¹³⁹ Gilboa, Eytan. "Trends in American Attitudes." Dynamics of Dependence: U.S.-Israeli Relations. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987): 48-49. Brackets added by author.

embodied in Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser.¹⁴⁰ More recently, with the end of the Cold War, and particularly following 9/11, Islamic fundamentalism has replaced Arab nationalism as the new “bad guy” in the region. (This phenomenon will be discussed further in Chapter 3.) In sum, as the perceived threats to American security in the region have changed the image of Israel as a reliable Middle Eastern ally has adapted to the new situation. Israeli leaders themselves often reinforced the image of Israel as both a partner and as dependent on American friendship and protection. Just before his first visit to the United as Israel’s leader, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert told the New York Times, “I feel that I come to my senior partner [President Bush], and I hope that he is ready to accept me as his partner.”¹⁴¹ While Israel will often follow its own policy prerogatives that may run counter to American interests in the region – particularly as related to Middle East peace process – its leaders almost always try to project an image of deep partnership with and, sometimes as in this case, also grateful subservience to the United States.

As noted in the discussion of Israel’s democratic image, some of the policies of recent Israeli governments have affected its image as a stable friend and ally of the United States. Policies such as land confiscation, demolition of Palestinian homes, the use of “moderate physical pressure” -- an Israeli euphemism for torture -- against

¹⁴⁰ Page, Benjamin I. and Robert Y. Shapiro. The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in American’s Policy Preferences. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992): 251.

¹⁴¹ Erlanger, Steven and Greg Myre. “Israel will buy Supplies for Gaza Hospitals, Premier Says,” New York Times, May 19 2006, page A12. Brackets added for clarification.

suspected terrorists,¹⁴² and the expansion of settlements in the Occupied Territories¹⁴³ have undermined the overwhelming positive of image of Israel that most Americans hold. The widespread beliefs that Israel has a “secret” nuclear arsenal and its apparent willingness to sell arms to repressive regimes makes it appear to be a rogue state that ignores international norms. These problems were further aggravated by Israel’s friendly relationship with South Africa’s Apartheid regime which may have undermined its support among groups critical of that regime -- most obviously African-Americans. When Israel’s policies run counter to the interests and desires of the American government, it tends to tarnish the image of Israel as “friendly” to the United States. Nevertheless, the damage that such policies cause is limited by the aforementioned widespread image that Israel is weak and threatened. Furthermore, the groups most concerned about issues like the violation of human rights have tended to be fringe political groups with little access to the mainstream media or influence over policy-making elites. While these images do exist, and do affect Israel’s standing with some subgroups within American society, they run counter to the overall picture that the vast majority of Americans hold of Israel and thus are generally not focused on by the public, the policymakers, and much of the media.

¹⁴² In 1999, the Israeli Supreme Court prohibited the practice of torture although some human rights groups contend that torture remains a common interrogation technique – particularly during the Second *Intifada*. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uses_of_torture_in_recent_times#Israel .

¹⁴³ Israel unilaterally withdrew from the Gaza Strip in 2005, so after this date references to settlement expansion can be taken as limited to the West Bank

Sheffer and Hofnung have identified several interrelated positive images of partnership and friendship including Israel as a scientific, technological, and trading partner. Americans have tended to admire Israel's ability to achieve economically in spite of its heavy defense burden. Recently, Israel's successes in high-tech fields -- many of which are spin-offs of defense investments -- have enhanced the image of Israel as a valuable military ally and economic partner. Related to this image is the previously discussed view of Israel as a strategic asset. This image initially emphasized Israel's value as a military and intelligence asset and more recently its scientific and technological prowess. Remarkably, the cognitive dissonance between the image of Israel as a "strategic asset" and Israel as needy "underdog" is rarely noted by observers and thus these contradictory images manage to coexist in the public mind.

Sheffer and Hofnung cite an image of "Israel as a Jewish refuge." This image of Israeli society is enshrined in the Israeli "Law of Return" which extends immigration rights to any Jew anywhere in the world and is specifically designed to protect Jews from anti-Semitic persecution. The immigration of persecuted Jewish Diasporas from a wide variety of countries has maintained and fostered this image. In the pre-state days, German and Polish Jews fled Hitler seeking refuge in Mandatory Palestine. In the immediate post-war period, the United States was deeply involved in the debate over allowing the Jewish survivors of the Holocaust to immigrate to Palestine. Following the creation of the Jewish state, hundreds of thousands of *Mizrahi* (or in Hebrew Eastern) Jews immigrated to Israel mostly from Arab countries. Since the 1960s, the primary focus has been on allowing persecuted Soviet Jews (and more recently Ethiopian Jews) to

immigrate to Israel. The American Jewish community made the issue of Soviet Jewish immigration into a bilateral issue between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The passage of the Jackson-Vanik amendment in the early 1970s tied Most-Favored-Nation trading privileges to freedom of immigration for Soviet Jews.

The view of Israel as a land of refuge for persecuted Jews -- which is closely related to American guilt over the Holocaust -- has strengthened American sympathies for Israel. As noted in the discussion of the pioneering image above, the sense of Jews fleeing religious persecution in Europe resonates with a deeply-held American belief in the right to be free from religious persecution. Both countries see themselves as nations of immigrants persecuted for their religious beliefs who have absorbed “your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breath free”¹⁴⁴ from countries that did not want them. The parallel between the American and Israeli efforts in this regard has led Americans to admire Israel’s humanitarian efforts and to see Israel as fulfilling a similar mission as the United States.

Along the same lines, both Americans and Israelis share a common sense of being victims of European persecution. Both American nationalism and Zionism were in effect attempts to repudiate the negative aspects of the “old world.” In the words of Former Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-SD): “We both invented ourselves. We both

¹⁴⁴ From Emma Lazarus’s famous 1883 sonnet “The New Colossus,” the last paragraph of which is engraved on the Statue of Liberty and has gained iconic status as part of American culture lore.

offered a home and opportunity to people who were not wanted anywhere else.”¹⁴⁵ The establishment of the Jewish state so shortly after the “Old World” had attempted to exterminate the Jews only reinforced this sense of empathy for the Jews as victims of European persecution. American events and symbols from the Revolutionary War era (the Boston Tea Party, Patrick Henry’s “Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death” Speech, and the Liberty Bell) resonate with the same sort of rebellion against European tyranny and persecution. Conversely, some Americans may have favored the creation of a Jewish state in the immediate post-Holocaust period, because they did not want large number of Jewish refugees immigrating to the United States. Nativist feelings, anti-Semitism, and early Cold War anti-Communism -- since Jews were associated in the public mind with Communism and Socialism -- may have actually reinforced the desire of some Americans to see the Jews establish their own state in a far away corner of the globe.¹⁴⁶

Israel’s Biblical “Super Story” All of these positive images are rooted in a deeper cultural connection -- which Sheffer and Hofnung overlook in their otherwise fairly comprehensive discussion -- that frames and strengthens all of the other images above. It is fair to say that these positive images of friendship and partnership would not be possible if they did not reinforce a pre-existing set of cultural affinities. Robert Bellah

¹⁴⁵ AIPAC Policy Conference, Washington, D.C., May 19, 1998.
<http://www.aipac.org/pc98/webcasts/dasc0519.shtml>.

¹⁴⁶ See Genizi, Haim. America’s Fair Share: The Admission and Resettlement of Displaced Persons, 1945-1952. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993). For the earlier period see Breitman, Richard and Alan M. Kraut. American Refugee Policy and European Jewry, 1933-1945. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987).

has associated these cultural affinities with “civil religion.” He argues that the “separation of church and state has not denied the [American] political realm a religious dimension.” He added that “certain common elements of religious orientation are shared by the great majority of Americans.”¹⁴⁷ New York Times Correspondent Thomas Friedman offers an insightful explanation of the manner in which American identity is tied to the Israeli experience. Friedman attempts to explain why the American media focuses on Israel far in excess of its actual importance to world affairs. In so doing, he also offers a crucial insight into Israel’s role as a pillar of American civil religion.

Thomas Friedman writes:

Men have never taken the world just as it comes; our minds are not just blank pages upon which reality paints itself. Whether that reality is Israel or anything else, it is always filtered through certain cultural and historical lenses before being painted on our minds. Israeli political theorist Yaron Ezrahi calls these lenses “super stories.” A super story, says Ezrahi, consists of a collection of myths, or ideological constructs, tied together by an overall narrative. This super story helps us to explain the world to ourselves, to determine what information we will treat as significant and, most important, to record our experiences and shape our values. Like any colored lens, it lets certain rays of light in and blocks out others. Religions are the most popular super stories, but so, too, are universalist ideologies such as Marxism. As it happens, the oldest, most widely known super story of Western civilization is the Bible: its stories, its characters, and its values constitute the main lens through which Western man looks at himself and at the world. The Jews -- the ancient Israelites -- are the main characters in this biblical super story.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ Bellah, Robert. “Civil Religion in America.” Daedalus. (Vol. 97, No. 1, Winter 1967): 3. Both quotes. Brackets added by author.

¹⁴⁸ Friedman, Thomas. From Beirut to Jerusalem (New York: Anchor Books / Doubleday, 1989): 427-428. I haven’t been able to determine if there is an original source from which Dr. Yaron Ezrahi (Hebrew University) is being quoted, but I suspect that this passage is based on a personal conversation.

This connection, perhaps more than any other, personalizes the connection of Americans to Israel. As a society, America is far more religious than other advanced industrialized states.¹⁴⁹ Religious imagery is deeply imbedded in American political rhetoric. In 1998, Vice-President Al Gore spoke of his personal connection to several of the images of Israel described above. Gore stated, “I was born in 1948, and when I was growing up watching world events, I saw in Israel a democracy surrounded by enemies, threatened with extinction, fighting for existence, sharing our values and *my Bible*.”¹⁵⁰ The Vice-President’s description is typical of the way in which many Americans have come to view Israel. Many American Christians have come to see Israel and the Jews as sharing with them a common “Judeo-Christian” heritage which is recorded in Hebrew Bible or “Old Testament.”¹⁵¹

Since the early days of Jewish statehood, the Israeli national narrative of the Jewish return to the ancient “Promised Land” has been widely known and accepted among the American public as the normative historical narrative of the region. If one makes the reasonable presumption that normative discourses within the wider society are

¹⁴⁹ This may explain, in part, why American and European attitudes towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have been so dramatically different. For the more secular European society, the Biblical Super Story is far less important and far less politically salient than it is in the United States.

¹⁵⁰ AIPAC Policy Conference, Washington, D.C., May 18, 1998.
<http://www.aipac.org/pc98/webcasts/gore0518.shtml>. Italics added.

¹⁵¹ Many Christians refer to early books of the Bible as the “Old Testament.” Most scholars prefer the term Hebrew Bible, because the term “Old Testament” implies that the “New Testament” has replaced the older one.

extensions of those often initiated in academia, then it is useful to consider Keith Whitelam's critique of the underlying assumptions of Biblical studies. Whitelam contends that:

The reason for the heat of the recent debate [over the possibilities of writing a history of early Israel] is to do precisely with the political, cultural, and religious implications of the construction of ancient Israel. These are, invariably, hidden elements in the discussions and, like most fundamental domain assumptions, very rarely appear upon the surface. The problem of the history of ancient Palestine remains unspoken, masked in the dominant discourse of biblical studies which is concerned principally with the search for ancient Israel as the locus for understanding the traditions of the Hebrew Bible and ultimately as the taproot of European and Western civilization.¹⁵²

Thus Biblical scholars, for the most part subconsciously, focus on the history of ancient Israel, because that discourse is meaningful to them as key to understanding their own civilization. Conversely, the history of ancient Philistines and Canaanites -- that is, the non-Jewish civilizations that existed alongside the ancient Jewish kingdoms -- have been ignored, because they offer little in terms of present-day meaning to modern scholars.

The same process which Ezrahi and Friedman speak of in the media and Whitelam describes in the academy thus occurs, partially as a by-product and partially of its own momentum, in the public at large. Americans -- both Jewish and Christian -- feel a special attachment and interest in the story of the birth (or "rebirth" from this perspective) of Israel which appears to be a modern reenactment of the Biblical Exodus. The heroic archetype of the journey from slavery to freedom touches a nerve of

familiarity within the psyche of many Americans who have grown up reading the stories of the Hebrew Bible. Bellah notes that behind American “civil religion at every point lie Biblical archetypes: Exodus, Chosen People, Promised Land, New Jerusalem, Sacrificial Death and Rebirth.”¹⁵³ It is easy to see how these archetypes, which are so prominent in the American psyche, enhance the ability of Americans to empathize with Israel.

Conversely, the Arab, and specifically the Palestinian, historical narratives -- which are widely accepted and understood in much of the Islamic world and developing world -- have remained almost unknown among the general public in the United States. As mentioned above, the Israeli narrative was popularized and exalted within American popular culture by the remarkable success of the Exodus -- which obviously evokes the aforementioned Biblical metaphor of the journey from enslavement to the Promised Land -- and reinforces the pre-existing cultural tendency of many American Christians to visualize modern-day Israelis as the direct religious heirs to the ancient Hebrews. The modern Jewish journey from slave labor and attempted extermination in Hitler’s concentration camps to a reborn Jewish is deeply evocative of a modern Exodus. The dramatic Biblical epics, especially in the 1950s, most prominently Charlton Heston as Moses in Cecil B. DeMille’s The Ten Commandments (1956), implicitly drove home the link between the modern Jewish people and their ancient homeland.

¹⁵² Whitlam, Keith W. The Invention of Ancient Israel: The Silencing of Palestinian History (London: Routledge, 1996): 11. Brackets added by author for clarification.

The Israeli government, in the process of constructing the national identity, has focused a great deal of time and effort on the archeological exploration of ancient Israel. These efforts have not only literally *dug up* more information on their own history, but they are a means of emphasizing their own connection to the land as the successors of the ancient Israelites. In so doing, they have often ignored or downplayed the archaeology and therefore the historical narrative of other peoples that once lived in the region. In a discussion of the opening of a controversial archaeological tunnel in Jerusalem in 1996, Palestinian-American scholar Rashid Khalidi critically describes the process that he sees at work:

Statements by Israeli spokesmen make it clear that this tunnel is meant to showcase only one of the 22 archeological strata that make up Jerusalem's rich history. Such attempts to grant privileges to one stratum over the others are predicated on a belief that one layer is "superior" and that the past can be manipulated to affect the present by "proving" this superiority. Thus, if one stratum of a city can be privileged, if one set of names derived from it can be given pride over all others below or above it, then a certain contemporary reality claiming roots in the past can be imposed on the present.¹⁵⁴

The emphasis on the Biblical connection to the land is particularly significant to Americans who often see the region through a Biblical lens. The American media has furthered this process by using Biblical images and analogies to relate present day events to their American audiences.

¹⁵³ Bellah, Robert. "Civil Religion in America." Daedalus. (Vol. 97, No. 1, Winter 1967): 18.

¹⁵⁴ Khalidi, Rashid I. "What 'Final Status'?" New York Times. October 3, 1996. Page A23

The unique significance of “Israel” in American Protestant theology and popular culture is crucial to understanding the universe of shared values that shapes the “special relationship.” The Bible has long been one of the primary elements of the American political culture. Wilson Carey McWilliams argues that:

The Bible is the great gate to Western culture, an indispensable key to our language, meanings, and thought. Scripture, moreover, has a special importance in American political thought and history. The Bible...has been the second voice in the grand dialogue of American political culture, an alternative to the “liberal tradition” set in the deepest foundations of American life.¹⁵⁵

Since the ancient Hebrews are the primary protagonists in the Bible, the modern-day actions of their Jewish descendants resonate in a unique manner to American Christian ears. The struggle to build a Jewish state in the ancient Holy Land naturally drew the interest and attention of Christians.

The deep connection between American identity and the Bible also reinforces American support for Israel. From the earliest days, America has had a deeply-seated cultural connection to the Biblical narrative. The early American settlers saw “the new Israelites in the promised land of the New World.”¹⁵⁶ Americans saw themselves as a “chosen people” and America as their “Promised Land.” Puritan minister John Winthrop

¹⁵⁵ McWilliams, Wilson Carey. “The Bible in the American Political Tradition.” Religion and Politics. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1984): 11. The “liberal tradition” is an apparent reference to Louis Hartz political science classic, “The Liberal Tradition in America; an interpretation of American Political Thought since the Revolution.” (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1955)

¹⁵⁶ Payne, Richard J. The Clash With Distant Cultures. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995): 22.

told Americans that “we must consider that we shall be a city upon a hill, the eyes of all the people are upon us.”¹⁵⁷ At the time of the American Revolution, many Americans accepted the view that the Colonies had become Israel and George Washington had become Joshua.¹⁵⁸ Ben Franklin would later proposed that image of Moses crossing the Red Sea be emblazoned on the seal of the United States. The United States has long seen itself from early on as “one nation under God.” American political discourse has long contained references to God and prayer. American identity has long contained a missionizing quality especially in relationship to its faith in democracy and freedom.

More recently, Ronald Reagan’s rhetoric seemed to speak to this quality. He renewed the image of America as a “City on a Hill” blessed by God. In a 1983 speech, Reagan told a convention of religious broadcasters that:

I have always believed that this blessed land was set apart in a special way, that some divine plan placed this great continent between the two oceans to be found from every corner of the earth -- people who had a special love for freedom and the courage to uproot themselves, leave their home land and friends to come to a strange land.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Baritz, Loren. City on a Hill: A History of Ideas and Myths in America. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1964): 17. Spelling modernized.

¹⁵⁸ Payne, Richard J. The Clash With Distant Cultures. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995): 27; Baritz, Loren. City on a Hill: A History of Ideas and Myths in America. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1964): 96.

¹⁵⁹ Payne, Richard J. The Clash With Distant Cultures 22-23.

In a 1983 message to Congress proposing a Constitutional amendment on school prayer, he stated that “our liberty springs from and depends upon an abiding faith in God.”¹⁶⁰ In 1984, Reagan pledged to an American Legion convention:

...To keep America a beacon of hope to the rest of the world and to return her to her rightful place as a champion of peace and freedom among the nations of the earth...we Americans cannot turn our backs on what history has asked of us. Keeping alive the hope of human freedom is America’s mission, and we cannot shrink from the task or falter in the call of duty.

From this language, it is easy to see how Israel’s Biblical origins and the sacred quality that Americans attaches to individual liberty and democracy have led Americans to sympathize with Israel. Israel seems to act as an extension and example of America’s sacred mission in a region where democracy is rare. There is a compatibility between Jewish idea that the Jews were chosen to be a “light unto the nations” and America’s own commitment to its own democratic mission. Indeed, there is an optimistic messianic quality in the language of both American nationalism and Zionism. In the context of all of the other images described above, the rebirth of Israel as a modern democracy seems to reinforce the American belief in their own self-defined democratizing mission.

Many American Christians, especially evangelical Protestants, viewed the early Zionist settlers sympathetically as the natural successors of the heroic ancient Hebrews whom they read about in their King James Bibles.¹⁶¹ American Christian Fundamentalists

¹⁶⁰ Payne, Richard J. The Clash With Distant Cultures: 30.

¹⁶¹ The same sympathy for the Jews also existed in Great Britain and was one of the factors involved in the British issuance of the Balfour Declaration in 1917. For example, British Prime Minister Lloyd George once told Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann

have a complex, and somewhat abstract, relationship with Jews and Zionism. Yaakov Ariel's description of their attitude before 1967 is illustrative:

The premillennialist attitude toward the prospect of the return of the Jews to their land and toward the Zionist movement was mostly instrumental. Premillennialists regarded the settlements of Jews in Palestine and the idea of establishing a Jewish state there as necessary steps in the advancement of eschatological developments. On the whole, insuring the survival and well-being of the Jews was not part of what motivated them in supporting these developments. They observed the movement of Jewish national restoration with much interest and joy. Although dispensationalism criticized the secular character of Zionism, they saw in it a fulfillment of prophecies and a confirmation of their understanding of God's plans for humanity.¹⁶²

Thus for many American Christians, particularly for Christian fundamentalists, American support for Israel reinforces their religious identity and their connection to and support for the American government that could be seen as doing "God's work" by assisting the God's "Chosen people" in redeeming the holy land and helping to bring about the Second Coming of their Savior.

American Orientalism. Yet another overlapping framework that reinforces the other frameworks described above is that of Orientalism. Unlike the more uniquely American frames described above, Orientalism is more of a European import. While the

that the names Judea, Samana, and Jerusalem "are more familiar to me than the names of the Welsh villages of my own childhood." Quoted from Friedman's From Beirut to Jerusalem: 428. See also Barbara Tuchman's The Bible and the Sword: England and Palestine from the Bronze Age to Balfour (New York: Ballantine Books, 1956).

¹⁶² Ariel, Yaakov S. On Behalf of Israel: American Fundamentalist Attitudes Towards Jews Judaism and Zionism 1865-1945. (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing, Inc., 1991): 120. In this context, premillennialism can be equated with Christian Fundamentalists.

other frameworks above describe how Americans interpret and understand Israel, Orientalism provides an intellectual construct for understanding Israel's Arab and Islamic adversaries. In a context that creates sympathy for Israel, Orientalism creates a context for seeing Israel's adversaries as America's presumed adversaries as well. Thus antipathy and distrust for the Arab and Islamic countries of the Middle East becomes the basis for even greater empathy and support for Israel.

Orientalism, of course, was built on a foundation of conflict between the West and Islam that is almost as old as Islam itself. The West has long perceived Islam as a threat to its survival and prosperity. Over a period of centuries, European rulers launched Crusades to liberate the Holy Land from Islamic "infidels." Over time as Europe became stronger vis-à-vis the Islamic world, the threat of Islam became more of an opportunity for European expansion in terms of both population and resources. European rulers expelled the Muslims from Spain (in 1492) and repelled the invading Turks from the gates of Vienna (in 1529 & 1683). Conflicts continued into the 18th and 19th centuries as European colonial invaders expanded into the Muslim world, mostly at the expense of the gradually shrinking Turkish-based Ottoman Empire. In this context, Europe has constructed an image of the Orient, which America would eventually inherit and reconstruct for its own purposes.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Orientalism was understood as a respected academic discipline for the study of Eastern cultures. Over the last several decades, particularly since the publication of Edward Said's now classic study,

Orientalism, it has taken on a more pejorative connotation as a discipline of thought that has been used to define a negative stereotype of the “Orient” and the “Oriental” in the minds of the dominant Western culture in order to establish and perpetuate Western domination of the so-called Orient. Said defines the “Orient” as “almost a European invention, and has been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences.....one of its [Europe’s] deepest and most recurring images of the Other.”¹⁶³ He defined Orientalism as “the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.”¹⁶⁴ He goes on to further define Orientalism as a “systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period.”¹⁶⁵ More intriguingly, Said argues that European identity and culture, particularly of the dominant colonial powers, France and Britain “gained strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self.”¹⁶⁶ Said argues that the European view of the “Oriental” became the

¹⁶³ Said, Edward. Orientalism. (New York: Random House/Vintage Books): 1. Brackets added for clarification of syntax.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid: 3.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid: 3.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid: 3.

intellectual basis for justifying the European colonial power structure throughout the region. By defining the “Oriental” as weaker and inferior the Western Christian, Europeans were able to intellectually justify European domination and control of the Orient – and its natural resources – as a responsibility that Europe must take up for the good of the people of the Orient. Kipling would later describe this, in a famous poem – as taking up the “White Man’s Burden.” While there were certainly aspects of truth in the Orientalist description of the East, as a whole the mythology of Orientalism was in essence a rationalization for power and domination, much as the widely held American racial beliefs of the 18th and 19th century were used to justify and rationalize the practice of American slavery. To Said, the Orientalist discourse is a manifestation of political and economic power and a means of enforcing the cultural hegemony of the Occident over the Orient. Beyond the dimension of power, Europeans were able to use the on-going conflict with the Orient as a means of defining themselves as “civilized” and their adversaries as “barbaric.”

The United States, also an intellectual product of European thought, inherited Europe’s cultural prejudices towards the Orient and made them its own as it developed its own intellectual tradition and relationship with the Middle East. America’s relationship with the Islamic world was defined almost from the beginning as one of competition and conflict. The early conflicts in the late 18th and early 19th centuries were over the American desire to expand its shipping routes into the Mediterranean Sea and the demands of Barbary pirates of Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli for tribute in

exchange for safe passage. When the Americans refused to pay the tribute the Islamic states took American sailors as hostages. This conflict climaxed in a war in which the United States defeated Tripoli (1801-05). However, as Robert Allison points out, this struggle was far more than just a contest for trade routes. This war took on far deeper meanings for the young American republic:

Americans at the time saw these episodes as part of the contest between Christians and Muslims, between Europeans and Turks or Moors, and ultimately, between what came to be called civilization and what the newly civilized world would define as barbarism. The Americans inherited this understanding of the Muslim world and pursued this enemy more relentlessly than the Europeans imagined themselves doing what the nations of Europe had been unable or unwilling to do: beating the forces of Islamic despotism and piracy. This war proved to Americans their real status as a nation and affirmed that theirs was to be a different kind of nation -- different both from the nations of Europe, which were content to pay tribute to the Barbary states, and from the Muslim states ravaged by their rulers and torn apart by their impoverished and savage people. For the Americans, the war had a significance far beyond military objectives. Pope Pius VII said the Americans had done more in a few years than the rest of Christendom had done in centuries. They had humbled the Muslim states of North Africa. The war against Tripoli was meant to do this, but it was also meant as a lesson to Europe. The Americans had proved that they would behave better than the Europeans, that they would not stoop to the demands of Tripoli or use the Barbary States to drive their own competitors from the sea. The war inspired the American people with a renewed sense of their mission and destiny...¹⁶⁷

During these same years, American culture reinforced the images and fears that Americans had about the Muslim world:

A flood of books on the Muslim world poured from American presses in the 1790s: captivity narratives; histories, including two biographies of Muhammad; novels and poems; and the first American edition of the

¹⁶⁷ Allison, Robert. The Crescent Obscured: The United States and the Muslim World, 1776-1815 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995): xv-xvi.

Arabian Nights. This literature conveyed a consistent picture of the Muslim world, an inverted image of the world the Americans were trying to create anew. The ability to create the world anew gave the Americans endless chances to improve people's lives but just as many chances to ruin them. In the literature on the Muslim world, Americans saw what could happen to people who made the wrong choices. Muhammad had offered people a chance to change, and change they did, adopting a new religion, building new states, and empires, reorganizing family life. But each change had been a tragic mistake. The once prosperous peoples of Egypt, Turkey, Mauritania, and Syria were impoverished by bad governments, and their fertile lands turned into deserts. In Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli, honest commerce was perverted in piracy by avaricious deys and pachas. Everywhere, women were debased in harems and seraglios, the victims of unrestrained sexual power. The Muslim world was a lesson for Americans in what not to do, in how not to construct a state, encourage commerce, or form families. Power had to be controlled, liberty had to be secured, for men and women to prosper and for societies to progress.¹⁶⁸

America's early encounter with the Islamic world helped shape America's nascent national identity. As in Europe, the Islamic world had become America's "other" by which it could continue to define itself against what it was not. While most Americans have forgotten, if they ever knew, the Tripolitan War -- except perhaps for the Marine fight song's now obscure reference to fighting America's battles from "the Halls of Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli" -- the images initially formed in this period have become a central part of the American image of a corrupt, decadent Islamic world that would remain a large part of America's image of Middle East.

These images would be further carried over in the 19th century by illustrated editions of *The Arabian Nights* and later by Mark Twain's 1869 account of his journey to the Holy Land, *Innocents Abroad* in which he described the Muslims as "a people by

¹⁶⁸ Allison: xvii. Italics original.

nature and training filthy, brutish, ignorant, unprogressive [and] superstitious.”¹⁶⁹ In the 1920s and 1930s, the negative images of the Muslim world would be carried forward in American magazines, particularly the Orientalist images conveyed in the ubiquitous National Geographic Magazine.¹⁷⁰ And as we explore later, once the moving pictures were created the images of the Muslim world would ultimately be the cultural fodder perpetuated by Hollywood.

The place of the Jews in the Orientalist picture of the world is somewhat peculiar. In Europe over many decades and into the early Twentieth century, the Jews remained a widely despised minority. They were the largest non-Christian minority in most parts of Europe and suffered centuries of persecution and segregation on the basis of religion and later racial pseudo-science. In Europe the Jews were outsiders, sometimes literally beyond the pale. In Europe, the Holocaust would become possible due to the indifference of the vast majority of Europeans to the fate of the Jews. But in the context of European Imperialism, the Zionist movement became in part an extension of European imperial ambitions in the Middle East. Ironically, in the context of Europe the Jews were broadly despised, but in the context of the Middle East, the Jews could be understood as more like the Europeans than the natives of those truly foreign lands. In a peculiar twist of fate, while the Zionists would see themselves as the victims of European persecution

¹⁶⁹ Little, Doug. American Orientalism. (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2002): 13. Little is quoting from Twain’s Innocents Abroad.

¹⁷⁰ Little, Doug. American Orientalism. (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2002): 18.

unwanted and persecuted in Europe, the Muslims would come to see the Jewish Zionists as an extension of European efforts to dominate and control Palestine.

In Post-World War II America, the view of the world would be constructed around the Manichean Cold War struggle with the Soviet Union. Over time, Israel would find its place within this struggle, initially mostly, as a client of its American patron, but also as an independent actor with its own interests and through its cultural ties and political influence within America via its sometimes uneasy relationship with the Jewish Diaspora in the United States. The Cold War would coincide with massive cultural shifts caused by these massive economic and political changes within and external to American society. These shifts included the civil rights movement, the rise of Christian fundamentalism, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, and the international economic shifts caused by decolonization. Each of these cultural shifts affected America's relationship with Israel in unintended and unexpected ways and in so doing have transformed American foreign policy in the Middle East. It is to these cultural shifts that we now turn.

Chapter 3 - Changes in American Political Culture

“The answer to the question must be neither one thing nor the other, but partly both one of those unsatisfactory truths with which history so often defeats its interpreters.” -- Barbara Tuchman¹⁷¹

As noted previously, the “special relationship” was established on strategic grounds in the early 1970s. Since that time the Arab oil embargo, the end of the Cold War, and the 1991 Gulf War have all weakened the argument that Israel’s status as a “strategic asset” is the primary basis for the “special relationship” with the United States. During the 1980s, the Likud-led Israeli governments remained intransigent about the advancing the Middle East peace process. Many of the positive images of Israel, for the reasons stated in the previous chapter, have weakened to some degree. And yet since the early 1980s, the “special relationship” has grown stronger, not weaker. Indeed, predictions of many observers that the end of the Cold War would lead to the end of the “special relationship” have not been fulfilled. The pro-Israel lobby has become and remained one of the strongest lobbies in Washington. The only way to explain this paradox is that a combination of mostly unrelated circumstances has led to a new set of cultural and ideological trends over the last several decades that have helped maintain and strengthen the pre-existing positive images that might otherwise have faltered as the strategic rationale for the relationship deteriorated over time.

¹⁷¹ Tuchman, Barbara. Bible and the Sword: England and Palestine from the Bronze Age to Balfour. (New York: Ballantine Books, 1956): 349.

While this transformation was difficult to observe at the time, because of the strategic framework of the Cold War overshadowed everything else, this analysis will seek to show that during the last decade of the Cold War the U.S.- Israel “special relationship” was gradually transforming from a strategic alliance into cultural-political alliance. This process seemed to begin during the Reagan administration and come to full fruition under the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations. (We will examine the historical progression in greater detail in chapters 4 and 5.) We shall see once its strategic rationale dissolved at the end of the Cold War, the alliance remained as strong as ever – suffering only a relatively brief crisis during the George H.W. Bush administration. Several otherwise unrelated social and cultural trends within American society seem to have acted in unison to strengthen the existing images and sympathies for Israel within American political culture. These trends seem almost entirely independent of any coordinated efforts on the part of the State of Israel, AIPAC, or the American Jews to influence the American political system. While Israel, AIPAC, the Jewish community and their allies have often attempted to enhance and exploit these trends for their own benefit, they had little to do with creating them. They have, however, often successfully managed how these even are interpreted and the significance and meaning that was attributed to them so that they would help enhance Israel’s positive image within the larger American political culture.

The Decline of Anti-Semitism. In recent years, the decline of anti-Semitism has furthered the integration of Jews into the multi-cultural mosaic of American society. As noted by Mansour above the status of the Jews within American society has a great deal

to do with American perceptions of Israel. In the years since the Second World War, the status of Jews has changed greatly. Horrifying revelations of the Holocaust combined with the civil rights movement led to the de-legitimization of anti-Semitism in the American context. Anti-Semitic beliefs which had been within the mainstream of political spectrum of the 1930s (embodied in such figures as Charles Lindbergh and Father Charles Coughlin), have moved to the fringes of American politics by the 1960s.¹⁷² A 1940 survey found that 63% of Americans believed that Jews had “objectionable qualities.” By 1962 this figure had dropped to 22%.¹⁷³ In 1958, 61% of Americans said that they would vote for a Jew for President; by 1987, that figure had risen to 89%.¹⁷⁴ In 2000, a slim popular vote majority supported Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-CT) for Vice-President.¹⁷⁵ Just as importantly, after the novelty had worn off, Lieberman’s religious faith did not seem to be a reason, at least publicly, for most Americans to oppose his candidacy. Something that would have been impossible a few generations before -- for Americans to vote for a non-Christian for the 2nd highest office in the land -- had become

¹⁷² Today, they embodied in such fringe figures as Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, Dr. Leonard Jefferies, David Duke and the various Holocaust deniers such as Bradley Smith.

¹⁷³ Stembler, Charles Herbert and Others. Jews in the Mind of America (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1966): 65.

¹⁷⁴ Chanes, Jerome A. “Antisemitism and Jewish Security in American Today: Interpreting the Data. Why Can’t Jews Take “Yes” for an Answer?” Antisemitism in America Today: Outspoken Experts Explode the Myths. (New York: A Birch Lane Press Book, 1995): 14.

¹⁷⁵ The Gore-Lieberman ticket, of course, ultimately lost the disputed Florida recount in the Supreme Court and thus in Electoral College.

essentially unremarkable. In some real sense, America had completed its transition from what many Americans would have called a “Christian” nation two generations before to one that could now widely be labeled with the peculiar moniker “Judeo-Christian.”

The idea that Jews formed a distinctive racial group was de-legitimized by the Holocaust. Between 1946 and 1962, the percentage of Americans who viewed Jews as a race dropped from 42% to 23%.¹⁷⁶ During the 1950s, the Jewish quotas which had restricted Jewish access to America’s elite universities were lifted. Indeed, most of the overt forms of anti-Semitism that had once existed in the United States began to fade away. Furthermore, the wave of suburbanization in the 1950s meant that many millions of American Jews moved out of the Jewish neighborhoods of the major East coast cities and moved into integrated suburbs. Jews have moved into prominent positions in professional fields as diverse as entertainment, journalism, medicine, law, politics, and the academy. Jews were no longer seen as a distinctive racial group (as they had been in the early part of the century), but as an ethnic group, with a shared religion, within an increasingly multicultural American mainstream. Matthew Jacobson notes the ironic effects of the combination that the Second World War, the Holocaust, the civil rights debate, suburbanization, and the creation of Jewish state had on American Jewry:

...The feverish and self-conscious revision of “the Jewish race” was at the very heart of the scientific project to rethink the “race concept” in general -- the racial devastation in Germany, that is, was largely responsible for the mid-century ascendance of “ethnicity.” Changes wrought in the U.S.

¹⁷⁶ Stembler, Charles Herbert and Others. Jews in the Mind of America: 50.

social order by the [the Second World] war and by the early Cold War, too, helped to speed the alchemy by which Hebrews became Caucasian....the steady but certain ascendance of Jim Crow as *the* pressing political issue of the day brought the ineluctable logic of the South's white-black binary into play with force in national life. Postwar prosperity and postindustrial shifts in the economy, too, tended to disperse Jews geographically, either to outlying suburbs or towards sunbelt cities like Los Angeles and Miami -- in either case, to places where whiteness itself eclipsed Jewishness in racial salience....Jews became simply "white or anglo" in the regional racial schemes of the sunbelt; and racially tilted policies like the GI Bill of Rights and Federal Housing Authority's "whites only" approach to suburban housing loans re-created Jews in their new regime of racial homogenization. Nikhil Singh has rightly called the postwar suburban boom a case of "state sponsored apartheid"; its hardening of race along exclusive and unforgiving lines of color held tremendous portent for Jews and other white races. And finally, ironically, if racialism has historically been an important component of Zionism, the establishment of a Jewish state ultimately had the opposite effect of whitening the Jews in cultural representation of all sorts: America's client state in the Middle East became, of ideological necessity and by the imperatives of American nationalism, a *white* client state. This revision was popularized not only in mainstream journalism, but in Technicolor extravaganzas on Middle Eastern history like *The Ten Commandments* and *Exodus*.¹⁷⁷

All of these factors led to Jews becoming more and more integrated into the mainstream of "white" middle class society. Interestingly enough, the creation of a Jewish state may have helped this process. The very fact that American Jews had a homeland -- even if most of their families had emigrated from Eastern Europe, not Israel -- made them more like other white ethnic immigrant groups. The establishment of a Jewish state hastened

¹⁷⁷ Jacobson, Matthew Frye. Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press): 188. Chapter 5 -- "Looking Jewish, Seeing Jews" -- discusses the manner in which the "white" status of Jews evolved in the United States. Italics original. Brackets added for clarification by author.

the transformation of the perception of Jews as a white ethnic group rather than a distinctive racial group.

Michelle Mart portrays the process in slightly different terms to essentially the same effect. She sees the Jewish position shifting within the gender discourse; whereas they had previously been defined as “outsiders,” they now became “insiders.” She argues that:

In the first half of the twentieth century, Jews were described in American culture by a whole set of stereotypes that set them apart as different and made them “outsiders” in American culture. Many Americans used the outsider images to scapegoat Jews for imagined or real ills in their lives. Anti-Semitism in the United States peaked soon after World War II and the popular postwar images of Jews, therefore, were informed by these stereotypes.... In the popular culture and political speech of the mid-to-late 1940s, Jews and Israelis were treated -- relative to their depiction -- as “outsiders.” Yet, within a decade, Jews and Israelis had become “insiders” and, thus, subject to a different set of political assumptions. This transition from outsider to insider status was reflected in the Jewish/Israeli role in cultural discourse. In the mid-1940s, for example, traditional American stereotypes of Jews and Israelis questioned the masculinity of Jewish men. As Jews became insiders, these stereotypes were replaced by another set of images emphasizing Jewish masculinity and similarity to other American men. There is an inherent connection between the construction of Jewish/Israeli masculinity and the perception of Jews as insiders, as similar to Americans, to be judged by similar political and social ideals: Israelis would not have been seen as insiders if they had not measured up to an image of traditional masculinity. Moreover, the emergence of Israelis as “insiders” had a powerful effect of the political assumptions of U.S. policymakers.¹⁷⁸

In a society where the primary distinction among groups have remained racial, this transition from a racial “outsiders” to “white” ethnic “insiders” can not be

underestimated. In many ways, American Jews have come to be seen as more American than Jewish. Through their efforts at cultural assimilation and political integration, American Jews have been politically empowered -- not just as individuals, but as a group. Ironically, the economic and political reasons that most American Jews pursued such efforts at integration probably had almost nothing to do with a desire to influence U.S. policy towards Israel. Rather, it reflected their desire to integrate into American society. In fact, their desire to integrate into American life reflects some aversion to being identified with Israel – which could lead to the questioning of their loyalty and patriotism. Yet their integration into American society established much of the underlying socio-cultural infrastructure of the “special relationship” between the United States and the State of Israel.

As Jews have become integrated into American society, they have become more-and-more willing to take stands on specifically Jewish issues. In the 1930s and 1940s, most Jews were averse to raising the issue of Jewish persecution in Europe, because they feared an anti-Semitic backlash. They believed -- probably correctly -- that anti-Semitism and isolationism were too widely accepted for their grievances to have much impact.¹⁷⁹ By the mid-1970s, the children and grandchildren of the 1930s generation were

¹⁷⁸ Mart, Michelle. “Tough Guys and American Cold War Policy: Images of Israel, 1948-1960.” Diplomatic History. (Vol. 20, No. 3, Summer, 1996): 361, 360. These quotes are presented in reverse order from the way they appear in the original text

¹⁷⁹ In fact, it is now well-known that some anti-Semitic officials within the Roosevelt administration actively obstructed efforts to allow persecuted German Jewish refugees to immigrate to the United States. The tragic story of the Jewish refugee ship, the *SS St. Louis*, which was sent back to Europe during the summer of 1939, is the most

far better integrated and economically established as part middle class professionals within the mainstream of American society. They were much more willing than earlier generations to advocate for pro-Jewish American policy. The defining case of this was the Jackson-Vanik amendment to help win immigration rights for Soviet Jews by tying Most-Favored-Nation trading status to human rights. At about the same time, and partly in response to the aforementioned 1974 campaign finance reform, American Jews began to organize publicly to lobby Congress on behalf of Israel. This reflects the new self-confidence and sense of personal security that American Jews felt within the United States.

Related to this feeling of security, American Jews have also undergone a process of growing commitment to the State of Israel. Before the Second World War, most American Jews did not support Zionism. Many traditionally-observant Jews often rejected Zionism on theological grounds since it brought about the creation of a secular Jewish state before the coming of the Messiah. Many less observant Jews, especially within the Reform movement, rejected the national connection of Jews to their ancient homeland. The tragedy of the Holocaust and the creation of a Jewish state quickly transformed the views that most Jews had of Zionism; most American Jews came to see a Jewish state as a bulwark against anti-Semitism and as a necessity for the immediate resettlement of European Jewish refugees. Over time, Israel's military, economic, and social successes became a source of pride and communal unity for American Jews. The

well-known example. See Thomas, Gordon and Max Morgan Witts. Voyage of the Damned. (New York: Stein and Day, 1974) for a full account.

triumph of the Six-Day War and particularly the reunification of Jerusalem -- which contains Judaism's holiest sites -- greatly increased American Jewish sense of identification with Israel. Furthermore, their integration into American society has been so complete that few American Jews fear, as they once did, that support for Israel will be interpreted as disloyalty to the United States. Indeed, the willingness of many American Jewish organizations to defend convicted spy Jonathan Pollard, an American Jew who was convicted of spying for Israel in the 1980s, indicates the degree to which many American Jews feel comfortable with their place in American society. Bernard Reich writes:

Zionism is a focus of Judaism....The American Jewish community debated the very necessity of a Jewish state before Israel's independence, and diverse perspectives...developed and were sustained even after 1948. The Six Day War and the crisis that preceded it dramatically altered the importance of Israel in American Jewish thinking. The threat to Israel's existence galvanized American Jews, and ambivalence within the American Jewish community virtually ended....After the war...the interdependence of Israeli Jews and Jews of the Diaspora, especially American Jews, became more obvious. The Yom Kippur War reinforced the "Zionization" of the American Jewish community. Israel's fate has become inextricably intertwined with American Jewish life and identification with Israel became a central characteristic of American Jewry. Support for Israel dominates American Jewish public life, is part of the American Jewish consensus on what it means to be a Jew, and is voiced by a large majority of American Jews. News about Israel dominates Anglo-Jewish newspapers and periodicals and is the mainstay of community annual fund-raising campaigns of Jewish philanthropic organizations. On the other hand, only a small proportion of American Jews express a passionate involvement with Israel, and fewer still think about immigrating to, and settling in, the country. In general, many American Jews do not have a detailed and differentiated knowledge of developments in Israel nor is its culture a significant part of their lives.¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ Reich, Bernard. Securing the Covenant: United States-Israel Relations After the Cold War. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995): 67-68.

Thus American Jews have developed a deep dedication to Israel's existence and security as part of their Jewish identity, while maintaining a relatively superficial understanding of the realities and complexities of Israel. Most American Jews are deeply committed to romanticized heroic image of Israel that often has little to do with the reality of Israeli life.

The integration of Jews into American society and their growing commitment to Israel have served as two of the key socio-cultural pillars of the "special relationship." While the U.S.-Israel "special relationship" really predated well-organized, well-funded public efforts by the Jewish community on behalf of Israel, there can be little doubt that in later years their efforts reinforced and ultimately strengthened it. As Bar-Siman-Tov observes:

...Although the American Jewish community and the Jewish lobby have played an important role in the special relationship, the real rationale of the relationship remained independent of them. Indeed, their role became more important after the special relationship was established; probably the relationship strengthened their role rather than vice versa.¹⁸¹

The active political role of the American Jewish community is not the only factor that has strengthened the "special relationship." Indeed, the transformation of a much broader segment of the American population has also played a crucial role in the development of the America's "passionate attachment" to Israel.

¹⁸¹ Bar-Siman-Tov. "The United States and Israel: A "Special Relationship."" Diplomatic History. (Vol. 22, No. 2, Spring, 1998): 262.

The Rise of the Religious Right. Over the last several decades, there has been a broad social transformation in the attitudes and activities of Christian fundamentalists. Starting in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the organized Christian right -- first in the form of Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority and later through Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition -- began playing a more active role in American politics. The religious right appears to have emerged in response to the perceived moral decay of American society, which was embodied for them in the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion-on-demand. While their primary interest has been in domestic social issues, they have also taken an active interest in U.S. foreign policy.¹⁸² Inspired by the belief that the creation of Israel and especially the 1967 reunification of Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty prefigured the Second Coming of Christ,¹⁸³ Christian fundamentalists have come to: "...See the events in the Middle East as an indication that history proceeds according to

¹⁸² Intriguingly, while the Christian Coalition has taken an active interest in encouraging the U.S. government to take stronger stands against the persecution of Christians in places as diverse as Sudan and China, they have not launched any significant criticisms against Israel or the Palestinian Authority for the mistreatment of the 10% of the Palestinian population that is Christian. Israeli mistreatment of Palestinian Christian is generally in the context of their Palestinian identity not their Christian identity. There have been some reports in recent years of Muslim Palestinians mistreating Palestinian Christians on religious grounds. Liberal Christian groups have expressed much more concern about the mistreatment of Palestinian Christians.

¹⁸³ The motivations of the religious Christians are somewhat parallel that of *Gush Enumim* (The Bloc of the Faithful), the Jewish settlers' movement in that both support the building of Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria in order to hasten the coming of the Messiah. They also have very real theological differences over many issues including the identity of the Messiah.

their understanding of God's plans for humanity. The history of the state of Israel provides them with encouragement and hope."¹⁸⁴

Thus the dramatic history of the State of Israel over the past several decades has served to reinforce the identity and beliefs of Christian fundamentalists. This sympathy has led much of the Christian right to advocate policies sympathetic to the State of Israel.¹⁸⁵ They have been particularly sympathetic to the Israeli right with whom they share the religious goal of "redeeming" the West Bank, which both groups often call by its Biblical names -- Judea and Samaria. This friendly relationship may well have been enhanced by the coincidence that the right-wing dominated Israeli coalitions throughout the 1980s while the American religious right was gaining influence in United States.¹⁸⁶ In recent years, support for the Israeli right has become a staple of right-wing talk radio shows, most prominently, Rush Limbaugh, who shares some of the economic and political predispositions of the Israeli right.

¹⁸⁴ Ariel, Yaakov S. On Behalf of Israel: American Fundamentalist Attitudes Towards Jews, Judaism and Zionism, 1865- 1945. (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing, Inc., 1991): 121.

¹⁸⁵ An isolationist, and some allege anti-Semitic, fringe of the movement associated most publicly with TV commentator Pat Buchanan has been vocally critical of Israel.

¹⁸⁶ The right-wing Likud party first came to power in Israel in 1977 and led Israeli coalitions from 1977-84, 1990-92, 1996-1999, and 2003-2006. The Likud co-led the national unity governments with opposition Labour party during two National Unity Governments from 1984-1990 and 2001-2003.

While the rise of the religious right has clearly strengthened sympathy for Israel among American Christians, Ronald Stockton has argued convincingly that the “Christian Zionist” phenomenon goes well beyond Christian fundamentalists. In a survey that he conducted, 46% of his respondents were defined as “Christian Zionists” because they agreed with the statement that the creation of the state of Israel was the “fulfillment of Biblical prophecy.”¹⁸⁷ Stockton goes on to argue that:

Christian Zionism -- while associated in certain peripheral ways with the New Religious Right -- deviates in major respects from that movement. It is particularly significant that while the New Religious Right is a partisan political movement, Christian Zionism is more a mainstream cultural theme linked to American self-identity and to the perception of America as a moral community....While Christian Zionism is disproportionately associated with the evangelical Christian base from which it historically sprang, the survey data indicates that it transcends these origins and has support in all religious, ideological, and political strata.¹⁸⁸

Stockton’s analysis reminds us of the importance of Robert Bellah’s concept of civil religion and Ezrahi’s Biblical “super stories” as mechanisms for allowing American Christians -- both fundamentalists and non-fundamentalist -- to relate to the Israeli experience. Conversely, Americans share few cultural, historical, or religious bonds with Arabs, Muslims, and their historical discourse.

¹⁸⁷ Stockton, Ronald R. “Christian Zionism: Prophecy and Public Opinion.” Middle East Journal. (Vol. 41, No. 2, Spring, 1987): 234-235.

¹⁸⁸ Stockton: 251.

The “Islamic Threat.”

The American Orientalist view of the world, described above, has served as a foundation for modern American images of the Arab and Islamic worlds.¹⁸⁹ Since the 1970s, events in the Middle East have seemed to reinforce the view of Islam as a threat and therefore indirectly reinforced Americans’ natural pre-existing sympathies towards Israel.¹⁹⁰ During that decade, the emergence of violently anti-Western Pan-Arab and later Islamic extremist movements in the Middle East came to be perceived by many Americans as a threat to their interests and values. A spate of hijackings and high profile terrorist attacks -- such as the Black September attack (1970), the attack on Israeli athletes at 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich, and the Entebbe hijacking (1976) -- cemented a deeply-rooted sense of distrust of Muslims and Arabs in minds of much of the American public.¹⁹¹ This distrust was reinforced by the 1973-74 Arab oil embargo that

¹⁸⁹ Since “most Americans do not distinguish between Arabs and Muslims and think that the two terms are synonymous, negative reporting about Islam automatically tarnishes the Arabs.” Suleiman, Michael. The Arabs in the Mind of America. (Brattleboro, VT: Amana Books, 1988) This being the case, this discussion will intertwine common and interlinked images and stereotypes of Islam and Arabs. While these groups are hardly synonymous, most of the American public barely distinguishes between them.

¹⁹⁰ Esposito, John. The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality? (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). Esposito uses this title sarcastically to indicate that the perceived Islamic threat has been greatly exaggerated.

¹⁹¹ The author has been trying to determine if the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy, exactly 1-year to the day after the beginning of the Six-Day War, by a Palestinian-American assassin angry about Kennedy’s support for Israel played a significant role in shaping American perceptions of Arabs and/or Palestinians. At this point, there is little evidence to suggest that this incident is an important turning point in American perceptions of the Middle East. By contrast, the

greatly frustrated and inconvenienced the American public. The Iranian Revolution and the holding of American hostages for over a year (November, 1979 to January, 1981) at the American embassy compound in Tehran further deepened the American hostility towards the Islamic world. Ironically, the holding of American hostages by an Islamic adversary was not a new image of Muslims, but unbeknownst to most Americans a revival the experience of one of America's earliest encounters of the Muslim world during the mostly-forgotten Tripolitan War (1801-1805)

In the 1980s, this antipathy was deepened by the 1983 bombing of Marine barracks in Lebanon, the holding of American hostages in Lebanon, and Ayatollah Khomeini's *fatwa* against Pakistani-born author Salman Rushdie. During the 1990s, these negative images of a violent Arab world have been further reinforced by Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, the first bombing of the World Trade Center, and the horrific terrorist attacks by Islamic militants against Israeli civilians. In the early 20th Century, the Sept 11, 2001 attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center followed by the U.S.-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq cemented these images in stone. Shain writes that Americans have held Arabs "collectively...accountable for the repudiation of

Munich Olympics massacre and other terrorist attacks in the 1970s which seemed to establish a much more significant perceptual link between "Palestinians" and "terrorism" in public consciousness. The political significance of the Robert F. Kennedy assassination and its relationship to American perceptions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict may be a promising avenue for future research.

America in Arab and Muslim countries and for terrorist activities of Islamists in the United States.”¹⁹²

Edward Said argues in Covering Islam that Americans interpret political events in the Muslim world in a manner that presents Muslims in a highly negative light. He writes:

Today Islam is defined negatively as that with which the West is radically at odds, and this tension establishes a framework radically limiting knowledge of Islam. So long as this framework stands, Islam, as a vitally lived experience for Muslims can not be known. This, unfortunately, is particularly true in the United States, and only slightly less true in Europe....the canonical, orthodox coverage of Islam that we find in the academy, in government, and in the media is all interrelated and has been *more* diffused, has seemed *more* persuasive and influential, in the West than any other “coverage” or interpretation. The success of this coverage can be attributed to the political influence of those people and institutions producing it rather than necessarily to truth or accuracy. I have also argued that this coverage has served purposes only tangentially related to actual knowledge of Islam itself. The result has been the triumph not just of a particular *knowledge* of Islam but rather of a particular *interpretation* which, however, has neither been unchallenged nor impervious to the kinds of questions asked by unorthodox, inquiring minds.¹⁹³

Thus the much of the media and the academy will often implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) present Islam in a distorted, negative manner. This results from several social phenomena involving the Arab and Islamic community. There are relatively few Arabs

¹⁹² Shain, Yossi. “Multicultural Foreign Policy.” Foreign Policy (No 100, Fall, 1995): 82. Shain is speaking of the Arab-American Diaspora in the United States and its role in American politics, but his point is clearly generalizable to the way in which Americans view all Arabs inside and outside of the United States.

¹⁹³ Said, Edward. Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981): 155, 161. Italics original.

or Muslims in the media or the academy. Most Muslims are relatively recent immigrants to the United States and thus often lack the education, skills to compete in these fields. New immigrants groups are also least likely to be familiar with the intricacies and culture of American politics and media -- especially when they come from countries that lacked democratic institutions and uncensored media. Furthermore, Arab- and Muslim-Americans have often been divided by religious, ethnic, and national cleavages, which have made it difficult for them to organize effectively to lobby political institutions and present themselves positively to the public. The few organizations dedicated to these goals have generally-speaking often been under funded and ineffective.

The stereotypes and negative images of Islam that exist in the media are often further amplified by popular culture. Jack Shaheen noted in 1998 that “since 1970, more than 300 major films have vilified Arabs.”¹⁹⁴ Beyond the movies, television and comic books also have a long tradition of portraying Arabs and Muslims in negative stereotyped ways. Arab women have been portrayed as veiled and exotic. They are often seen as either belly dancers or members of harems. Arab men are regularly portrayed as violent, fanatical, wealthy, scheming, dirty, and lascivious. They are usually dressed in turbans or Yassar Arafat-style *kaffiyehs*. The most popular stereotypes are of either oil sheiks or terrorists. Images of camels and deserts also abound. It is also worth noting that while

¹⁹⁴ Shaheen, Jack G. “A Look At...The Power of Film: The Image Breakers; We’ve Seen This Plot Too Many Times.” Washington Post (November 15, 1998): C3.

negative images of Arabs and Muslims are common in popular culture, positive or even “normal” ordinary images of Arabs and Muslims are very rare.¹⁹⁵

As noted above by Said, Europe defined itself against the “other” of the Orient. Sociologically, it is not unusual for nations to define themselves against “others” in order to promote national unity and group cohesion. Sociologist Lewis Coser describes this phenomenon as follow:

Rigidly organized struggle groups may actually search for enemies with the deliberate purpose or the unwitting result of maintaining unity and internal cohesion. Such groups may actually perceive an outside threat although no threat is present. Under conditions yet to be discovered, imaginary threats have the same group-integrating function as real threats.¹⁹⁶

The United States, which, unlike most European states, lacks an ethnic basis for national identity, has according to some scholars been particularly needy of “others” through which to unify its diverse and often fractious polity. Michael Rogin argues that:

¹⁹⁵ The images are summarized from Shaheen, Jack G. TV Arab (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Press, 1984; Shaheen, Jack G. “Arab Images in American Comic Books,” Journal of Popular Culture (Summer 1994, Vol. 28, No. 1): 123-133; Shaheen, Jack G. “Aladdin” Cineaste (Winter 1993, Vol. 20, No. 1): 49; Shaheen, Jack G. “The Hollywood Arab: 1984-86.” Journal of Popular Film and Television (Winter 1987, Vol. 14, No. 4): 148-157; Shaheen, Jack G. “The Media’s Image of Arabs.” Newsweek (February 29, 1988, Vol. 111, No 9): 10; Hanania, Ray. “One of the Bad Guys?” Newsweek (November 2, 1998, Vol. 132, Issue 18): 14. Shaheen also narrated a recent documentary on this subjected entitled Reel Bad Arabs.

¹⁹⁶ Lewis Coser, “Conflict with Out-Groups and Group Structure.” Conflict Behavior & Linkage Politics. (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1973)

...The creation of monsters as a continuing feature of American politics by inflation, stigmatization, and dehumanization of political foes. These monsters -- the Indian cannibal, the black rapist, the papal whore of Babylon, the monster-hydra United States Bank, the demon rum, the bomb throwing anarchist, the many-tentacled Communist conspiracy, the agents of international terrorism -- familiar in the dream-life that so often dominates Americans politics....American demonology has both a form and a content. The demonologist splits the world in two, attributing magical, pervasive power to a conspiratorial center of evil. Fearing chaos and secret penetration, the counter subversive interprets local initiatives as signs of alien power. Discrete individuals and groups become, in the countersubversive imagination, members of a single political body directed by its head. The countersubversive needs monsters to give shape to his anxieties and to permit to indulge his forbidden desires. Demonization allows the countersubversive, in the name of battling the subversive, to imitate his enemy....American countersubversion has taken its shape from the pervasiveness of propertied individualism in our political culture; expansionist character of our history; and the definition of American identity against racial, ethnic, class, and gender aliens.¹⁹⁷

Thus Rogin argues the subversive “other” must be powerful, unified, well-coordinated and dangerous. This sort of analysis does not intend to suggest that in some or all of these cases that there may not be a genuine threat to American interests -- albeit perhaps not an existential threat to American survival that is sometimes perceived. Indeed, a real threat is far easier to explain than an imagined one. Nor does this analysis suggest that those who are trying to convince others that such a threat is real are disingenuous; indeed, it is most likely that they themselves are convinced that an existential threat exists. This sort of analysis merely suggest that there is, within the American identity, a great need to summon up powerful threatening demons in order to preserve national unity against internal fissures, regardless of whether they actually exist.

¹⁹⁷ Rogin, Michael. Ronald Reagan, the Movie (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987): xiii, xiv.

John Esposito and other scholars have argued that the end of the Cold War and the defeat of the monolithic enemy of Soviet Communism, may have led Americans to demonize Islam as America's next monolithic enemy. Esposito fears that Americans are making many of the same mistakes that they made during the Cold War. Writing almost a decade before the September 11th attacks, he contends that:

Celebration of the unraveling of communism and the victory of democracy has been tempered by questions that go to the heart of our ability to understand, analyze, and formulate policy. Delight at the triumph of democracy has been accompanied by a growing realization of the extent to which fear and demonizing of the enemy blinded many to the true extent of the Soviet threat. Viewing the Soviet Union through the prism of the "evil empire" often proved ideologically reassuring and emotionally satisfying, justifying the expenditure of enormous resources and the support of a vast military-industrial complex. However, our easy stereotypes of the enemy and the monolithic nature of the communist threat also proved costly. Despite an enormous amount of intelligence and analysis, few seemed to know that in the end the emperor had no clothes.... The exaggerated fears and static vision which drove us to take herculean steps against a monolithic enemy blinded us to the diversity within the Soviet Union and the profound changes that were taking place. Similarly, in understanding and responding to present-day events in the Muslim world, we are again challenged to resist easy stereotypes and solutions.... The easy path is to view Islam and Islamic revivalism as a threat -- to posit a global Pan-Islamic threat, monolithic in nature, a historic enemy whose faith and agenda are diametrically opposed to the West.... Just as perceiving the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe through the prism of the "evil empire" had its costs, so too the tendency of American administrations and the media to equate Islam and Islamic activism with Qaddafi/Khomeini and thus with radicalism, terrorism, and anti-Americanism has seriously hampered our understanding and conditioned our responses.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁸ Esposito, John. The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality? (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). 168-169.

Thus as America searches for a new enemy, it also searches for allies. Israel -- previously an ally in America's struggle against the Communism -- has long been viewed as an adversary of Arab regimes and by extension of Islam. Thus if Islam is to be America's next enemy, then it is logical within such a bifurcated and polarized worldview that Israel is to be perceived as an especially close ally. Clearly, the distrust of Americans for Arabs and Muslims has served indirectly to strengthen the sympathy of Americans for Israel, which many Americans view as a strategic bulwark against a violent and hostile Arab world. As Sheffer and Hofnung note, Israel is perceived in this context as a military partner and an effective and aggressive ally in the "War on terrorism" that helps defend American interests in the hostile Middle East. They add that "the [1976] raid on Entebbe...is still favorably recalled by many Americans."¹⁹⁹ The Entebbe Raid, which spawned at least three movies,²⁰⁰ is emblematic of one of the few times in which a government has successfully struck back at terrorists. Given the general frustration and sense of helplessness that Americans feel about their country's inability to

¹⁹⁹ Sheffer, Gabriel and Menachem Hofnung. "Israel's Image." 19. Brackets added for clarification.

²⁰⁰ The Raid on Entebbe is a 1977 US-made TV movie with Peter Finch as Yitzhak Rabin, Martin Balsam, Jack Warden, and Charles Bronson. It won 2 Emmys and a Golden Globe. Victory at Entebbe is a 1977 US-made TV movie with an all star cast of Kirk Douglas, Richard Dreyfus (as Yoni Netanyahu), Helen Hayes, Anthony Hopkins (as Yitzhak Rabin), Burt Lancaster (as Shimon Peres), and Elizabeth Taylor. Operation Thunderbolt is a 1977 Israel-made Hebrew movie with Gila Almagor, Assi Dayan, Yehoram Gaon as Yoni Netanyahu. It was nominated for an Oscar for Best Foreign film. Source: www.imdb.com.

do much about terrorism, Entebbe reinforces Israel's image as an important and successful ally in the "War on terrorism."

The disconnection between Americans and Arab-Muslim experience is increased further by the inability of Americans to relate to the colonial discourse that has shaped Arab and Muslim perceptions of their relationship with the West. For most people in the developing world, the creation of Israel seems to closely parallel actions of colonial powers. While the Israeli experience is in many ways distinct from a traditional colonial project, it is through these eyes that most people in formerly colonized nations view the modern Israeli state. While Americans have become increasingly aware of their own mistreatment of Native Americans, they have not really made the intellectual leap to perceive the United States as having colonized the American continent. Americans prefer to view themselves as anti-colonialists who defeated the British Empire than as colonizers themselves. It is far easier for most Americans to relate to and sympathize with the Israeli immigrant experience than for them to relate to the Arab experience of having been victimized by colonizers.²⁰¹ The polling data below from Eytan Gilboa is highly suggestive of the stereotypes that Americans have about Arabs and Israelis.

²⁰¹ Arab-Americans and African-Americans are exceptions to this general tendency among most Americans. Mansour: 273.

Images of Israelis and Arabs²⁰²

Does each world apply more to Arabs or more to Israelis?

	More to Don't Israelis	More to Arabs	More to Equally	To Both Neither	To Know
Peaceful	41%	7%	9%	24%	19%
Honest	39%	6%	13%	18%	25%
Intelligent	39%	8%	26%	5%	21%
Like Americans	50%	5%	8%	17%	21%
Friendly	46%	6%	15%	11%	23%
Backward	6%	47%	7%	15%	25%
Underdeveloped	9%	47%	10%	10%	25%
Poor	21%	34%	9%	15%	22%
Greedy	9%	41%	20%	7%	23%
Arrogant	11%	37%	19%	7%	26%
Moderate	33%	20%	21%	3%	24%
Developing	33%	20%	21%	3%	24%
Barbaric	4%	38%	8%	23%	28%

Some scholars have also suggested that there is a racial element to this phenomenon in that the Israeli Jews are perceived as “white” and Arabs are “people of color” for whom it is harder for Americans to sympathize. This fits in with the manner in which Jews came to be perceived as “white” in the postwar United States (as described above) and the negative perceptions of Arabs and Muslims. A long list of film portrayal can be seen as reinforcing these racial stereotypes. Michael Hunt, for example, contends that racial stereotypes are at the heart of American foreign policy in the Middle East. Hunt argues that:

²⁰² Gilboa, Eytan. American Public Opinion toward Israel and the Arab-Israeli Conflict. (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books / D.C. Heath Company, 1987): 307.

The paternalism and contempt evident in the Vietnam ‘adventure’ testifies to the continuing influence of culture-bound, color-conscious world view that still positions nations and peoples in a hierarchy defined at the extremes by civilization and barbarism, modernity and tradition. It renders us sympathetic to forward-looking Israelis, seen largely as Europeans, at loggerheads with swarthy bearded, polygamous, fanatical Arabs.²⁰³

Camille Mansour offers a somewhat more nuanced view of the political context. He contends that:

Israel perceives itself and is perceived as being part of European and Western culture. It identifies and is identified with the West and its Judeo-Christian heritage. It is interesting to note in this regard that although Zionism and the creation of Israel signified in a certain sense the rejection of the Jews by Europeans and concomitantly, the refusal of Jews to assimilate in Europe, the Yishuv and Israel are nonetheless seen as belonging to Western civilization.... Perhaps the perception of the Arab-Muslim world... as different and hostile helps them rediscover points in common with the culture they thought they had rejected.... The feeling of being part of a European “we,” although it contains many cultural elements in common, does not express a common and uniform culture... as a cultural identification which is, as we have seen, of an “ideological” nature, that is, voluntaristic and explicit.... Another factor reduces the extent of “orientalization” of Israel: the progressive Americanization of [Israeli] society, as manifested in film, television, modes of consumption and the liberalization of the economy.²⁰⁴

²⁰³ Hunt, Michael. Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987): 177. The image of Israelis as Europeans is rather ironic since the majority of Israeli Jews immigrated to Israel from Arab countries. Nevertheless, the Israeli elite are more European than the population as a whole. Most of the early Israeli leaders (Ben-Gurion, Eshkol, Begin, Peres, etc) spoke English with an Eastern European accent; Golda Meir and Benjamin Netanyahu spoke/speak with American accents.

²⁰⁴ Mansour, Camille. Beyond Alliance: Israel in U.S. Foreign Policy. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994): 268-269. Brackets added for clarification.

Thus it becomes clear that for a series of interrelated reasons, American public has continues to view the Arab and Islamic worlds in highly negative and adversarial manner. This cultural context further enhances the view that Israel is a necessary and loyal American ally in the Middle East.

American Perceptions of the Holocaust. Now we turn to the manner in which Americans perceive the Holocaust. Many Jews have long-believed that the Holocaust was a unique event with no historical parallels, before or since; over time, this view has gradually been accepted by much of the American public. In 1960s and 1970s, the Holocaust emerged as an important American historical memory. Edward Linenthal describes the process as follows:

What came to be known as “The Holocaust” was often indistinguishable in the immediate postwar years from the millions of non-combatant casualties due to terror bombings of civilian populations, epidemic illnesses, or starvation. It was considered by most as simply part of the horror of war. And, if the Holocaust “lived” at all in American culture, it did so in survivor memories, the displaced memories of those who had been characterized as “displaced persons” in American culture. The Holocaust emerged gradually as a significant cultural memory in the 1960s with the widely publicized trial of Adolf Eichmann in Israel beginning in April 1961. In 1967, the Six-Day War seemingly threatened Israel with annihilation, the announced goal of Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser. Another Holocaust seemed in the making, and the Holocaust became the backdrop against which many American Jews perceived the crisis. The year 1978 was important in the development of Holocaust consciousness. The highly publicized threat by American Nazis to march through Skokie, Illinois, home to many Holocaust survivors, brought the principle of free speech into the conflict with survivor sensibilities. The Office of Special Investigation was created to bring to trial Nazi war criminals living in the United States. NBC’s nine-and-one-half-hour miniseries “The Holocaust” aired April 16-19, 1978, with an estimated audience of one hundred twenty million. And it was in 1978 that President Jimmy Carter announced his intention to create the

President's Commission on the Holocaust....The formation of the Commission signaled that the Holocaust had moved not only from the periphery to the center of American Jewish consciousness, but to the center of national consciousness, as well.²⁰⁵

The 1980s and 1990s seemed to further the American fascination with the Holocaust. The horrific genocide in Bosnia helped stir a renewal of interest in the last genocide in Europe. The growing awareness of and empathy for the Jews as survivors of the Nazi Holocaust has added to the support for Israel among Americans. These sympathies were reinforced by the 1993 release of Steven Spielberg's Academy-Award winning epic, Schindler's List.²⁰⁶ This film brought the atrocities of the Holocaust into the movie theaters and ultimately the living rooms of a new generation of Americans. It is not surprising that when the movie was broadcast on network television, a corporate sponsor and the network made the highly unusual gesture of underwriting the entire film as an uninterrupted commercial-free broadcast.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ Linenthal, Edward. "Locating Holocaust Memory." American Sacred Space. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995): 222-224

²⁰⁶ Schindler's List was nominated for 12 Academy Awards of which it won 7 including Best Picture and Best Director for Steven Spielberg. From www.imdb.com.

²⁰⁷ It is particularly ironic that the corporate sponsor was the Ford Motor Company, which was founded by Henry Ford. Ford was a well-known anti-Semite who was responsible for circulating the English translation of the famous anti-Semitic tract, The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, in the United States.

Americans have accepted a certain sense of guilt and shame, perhaps disproportionately so, for their failure to help the Jews²⁰⁸ and for America's own history of anti-Semitism. Robert Abzug, speaking of Americans and American culture, writes:

The Nazis could not be written off as products of some primitive culture...for they had grown up in one of the most advanced societies in Europe and shared with Americans and the rest of the West racial, religious and ethnic attitudes that were the precondition for Auschwitz. In many ways they were us, and that was difficult to face.... Our culture has made scenes of the liberation and other evidence of what we now call the Holocaust into universal symbols of humankind's inhuman capacities. They could not be more appropriate. Yet the danger inherent in symbolizing "man's inhumanity to man" with the dead and the dying of Buchenwald or of some latter-day tragedy is that it helps us to distance ourselves from both the specific victims and from the fact that each act of genocide or other mass murder or starvation has had its roots in very specific political, economic, and cultural conditions.²⁰⁹

Thus American culture has privileged the suffering of Jews during the Holocaust. This allows Americans to establish a unique relationship with Israel where Israel's actions are rarely, if ever, challenged while her adversaries' suffering can easily be ignored or downplayed because it is not as bad as what the Jews suffered in the Holocaust.

The opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1993 has greatly increased the historical consciousness of the Holocaust among Americans. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, which has been the busiest tourist attraction in nation's capitol since its opening, was

²⁰⁸ For a full discussion of this issue see Wyman, David S. The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust: 1941-1945. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984) & Breitman, Richard and Alan M. Kraut. See American Refugee Policy and European Jewry, 1933-1945. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987) for details on American refugee policy before and during the Second World War.

²⁰⁹ Abzug, Robert. Inside the Vicious Heart: Americans and the Liberation of the Nazi Concentration Camps. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985): 18, 172

constructed on the national mall -- a mere 400 yards from the Washington Monument.²¹⁰ The Museum has served to sanctify the unique place of the Holocaust in the American national consciousness. No other event that took place outside the United States and primarily effected non-Americans has achieved such a place of honor in America's sacred national space.²¹¹

David Schoenbaum notes that "it is hard to think of another [foreign policy] relationship...where a national museum -- the National Holocaust Museum -- in Washington is also a foreign policy document..."²¹² The Holocaust has now achieved a unique significance in American political culture. Jews have been portrayed in the American mind as having been uniquely victimized by the Christian world and have therefore become especially deserving of American patronage and practically unquestioned political support. Thus the unique place of the Holocaust in the American national memory reinforces the American sympathy and support for the state of Israel. Mansour describes the place of the Holocaust in American collective consciousness:

...The Jewish community, in appealing for defense of the Israelis as survivors of Nazism encounters a favorable echo with Americans, who have the collective memory of having fought the war to save the Jews from Nazi massacres -- which was not exactly true historically.... This echo is perhaps, by reaction more favorable among those who believe that

²¹⁰ [Http://www.ushmm.org/misc-bin/add_goback/facts.html](http://www.ushmm.org/misc-bin/add_goback/facts.html)

²¹¹ The designers of the museum have attempted to reinforce the rather tenuous link between the Holocaust and the United States by putting recordings of the voices of the American soldiers who liberated some of the camps in the elevators that take visitors up to the beginning of the main exhibit.

²¹² Schoenbaum. "Commentary: More Special than Others." Diplomatic History. (Vol. 22, No. 2, Spring, 1998): 275. The truth of this statement was demonstrated by the fascinating controversy that enveloped the museum in January 1998 over whether or not to extend an invitation to visit the Museum to Palestinian Authority President Yasir Arafat.

the United States did not do enough for the Jews during the war. One cannot stress enough the importance of American (and Western) experience during World War II -- the massacre by the Nazis of the European Jewish communities, the civilian and military losses suffered by the Allies in combat, but also the final victory -- as a factor explaining extreme sensitivity in American society regarding anti-Semitism. This sensitivity is especially marked in veterans of the war and in certain "philo-Semitic" Christian groups deeply attached to the Old Testament. Members of the American sociopolitical elite are imbued with this sensitivity, which has become a central and even sacralized value within the political system; it manifests itself positively in the fear of a return of the "demons" of Nazism and negatively in the fear of being labeled anti-Semitic. The American and Western rejection of anti-Semitism is thus not yet totally spontaneous and serene. Might this explain a certain compensatory attitude that leads Americans to acquiesce without criticism to the pro-Israeli appeals of the lobby?²¹³

Let us now consider how these changes in political culture have played out in the historical development of the U.S.-Israel alliance.

²¹³ Mansour, Camille: Beyond Alliance: Israel in U.S. Foreign Policy. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994): 266-67

Chapter 4 –

The History and Development of the U.S.-Israel Relationship during the Cold War

The U.S.-Israel Relationship has evolved greatly since its conception going thru a series of phases that will be described below. The myth that the U.S. and Israel were close allies from the founding of the Jewish state is belied by the historical facts. Despite President Truman's oft-cited decision to offer *de facto* recognition of Israel only minutes after the state declared independence on May 15, 1948, and despite political claims of 50 years of strategic partnership to the contrary, the strategic partnership between the two states did not develop during the early years of the Cold War. Starting in the early 1950s, Israel, under the leadership of David Ben-Gurion, almost always sought to build a close alliance with the United States. The close relationship developed gradually primarily as a result of a combination of strategic, cultural, and political factors within the United States. This study divides the U.S.-Israel relationship into seven rough phases:

- 1) The Pre-State Period, 1917 – 1948
- 2) The Non-Strategic Period, 1948-1958
- 3) The Emerging Strategic Relationship, 1958-1970
- 4) The Strategic "Special Relationship," 1970-1982
- 5) The Late Cold War Political-Cultural "Special Relationship," 1982-1993
- 6) The Post Cold War Political-Cultural "Special Relationship, 1993-2001
- 7) The "War on Terror" Neo-Conservative "Special Relationship," 2001-present

The five Cold War phases will be discussed in this chapter and the final two Post-Cold War phases will be discussed in Chapter 5. From the start it is worth noting the

importance of key events in the narrative. Numerous political and military crises [such as the crises in Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq (1958), the Six-Day War (1967), “Black September” (1970), the Camp David Accords (1978), the Iranian Revolution (1979), and the Lebanon War (1982), the first *Intifada* (1987-93), the First Gulf War (1991), and the 2nd *Intifada* (2000-present)] greatly changed the strategic analysis that was applied to Israel. Each of these events has been interpreted to increase the strategic importance and commitment attached to Israel. However, even events that might have defined Israel as more of a strategic burden [e.g....the attack on the USS Liberty (1967), Arab oil embargo (1974), annexation of the Golan Heights (1981), the end of the Cold War (1989), Gulf War (1990-91), the September 11th attacks on the U.S. (2001)] tended to have little or no long-term effect on the U.S.-Israel Alliance. Sometimes, the event caused a temporary period of dispute or tension, but the effects were never long-lasting. The relationship would always snap back into place and often stronger than before. Thus events in which Israel could be understood as a strategic asset were emphasized politically as strategically important to the relationship, while events in which Israel was more of a strategic burden were de-emphasized politically as insignificant to the overall health of the relationship.

Pre-State Period: Before the Second World War, Zionism did not play a major role in American politics. There were some organized efforts to gain U.S. support for creating a Jewish by early Zionist groups such as the Zionist Organization of America. The Zionist movement was relatively small before the First World War and most American Jews were recent Eastern European who had chosen to immigrate to the United States. Most Jewish organizations were limited in their scope and most American Jews

were only just beginning to integrate into the American society. Anti-Semitism remained a major threat and the strongest political movement among most American Jews was socialism. Most Orthodox Jews rejected the Zionist movement, because of its secularism and for advocating a return to Zion before the coming of the Messiah. The Reform movement rejected Zionism, because it rejected the Zionism view that Jews were living in the *galut* (exile) and that the Jewish future lay in return to the Holy Land. For most American Jews, Zionism was a pipe dream. Regardless, the Jewish community lacked the political clout to be a major political player at this stage. There were some early efforts to recruit the support of the American political leadership for Zionism – notably in 1918 following the publication of the British Balfour Declaration.²¹⁴ In 1922, the Republican controlled Congress passed a resolution sponsored by Sen. Henry Cabot Lodge (R-MA) and Rep. Hamilton Fish, Jr. (R-NY) in support of Zionism echoing almost exactly the wording of the 1917 Balfour Declaration:

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the United States of America favors the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of Christian and all other non-Jewish communities in Palestine, and that the holy places and religious buildings and sites in Palestine shall be adequately protected. (September 21, 1922)²¹⁵

²¹⁴ Fink, Reuben. The American War Congress and Zionism: Statements by Members of the American War Congress on the Jewish National Movement. New York: Zionist Organization of America, 1919)

²¹⁵ <http://course1.winona.edu/aclafandi/PolSci270/documents.htm#Congressional>
/ See also <http://www.ismi.emory.edu/primarysource.html> for the Congressional debate that surrounded House Joint Resolution 322

Nevertheless, this resolution seemed more of symbolic endorsement of the Balfour resolution and the British Mandate in Palestine than a real indication of an active American policy. During the 1920s, 1930s, and particularly during the 1940s, every American President and hundreds of members of the House and Senate offered rhetorical support for the idea of a Jewish state in Palestine,²¹⁶ but there was little policy engagement since remained under a British Mandate and United States had moved into a phase of international isolationism.

While the Jewish community was a part of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal Coalition, primarily as a result of economic concerns resulting from the Great Depression, there is little indication that the Roosevelt administration responding to Jewish concerns about the fate of European Jewry or Zionism. The most infamous incident was the refusal of the U.S. government to allow S.S. St. Louis, a ship carrying nearly a thousand European Jewish refugees, to land in the U.S. in 1939. President Roosevelt turned the refugees away under political pressure from Secretary of State Cordell Hull and Southern Democrats.²¹⁷ This incident is indicative of how little influence the Jewish community had in the politics of the period. This was a period

²¹⁶ The voluminous comments of all of the Presidents and members of Congress are contained in Fink, Reuben. America and Palestine: The Attitude of Official America and of the American People Toward the Rebuilding of Palestine as a Free and Democratic Jewish Commonwealth. (New York, American Zionist Emergency Council, 1944). The Presidents, p. 87-88, US Senators, p. 89-158, Representative, p. 159-389.

²¹⁷ Gordon Thomas and Max Morgan Witts. Voyage of the Damned. (New York: Stein and Day, 1974)

when the anti-Semitism of Henry Ford, Father Charles Coughlin, and Charles Lindbergh remained a prominent part of American political discourse. This pattern tragically continued throughout the Second World War with a pattern of U.S. indifference to the unfolding genocide of European Jewry.²¹⁸

Not surprisingly, the Roosevelt administration was just as indifferent to the efforts of the Zionists although they had begun to gain some influence in Congress. In 1944, the issue of Zionism was raised in Congress in S. Res. 247 co-sponsored by Senator Robert F. Wagner (D-NY) and Robert A. Taft (R-OH). They proposed a bipartisan resolution that read:

Resolved, that the United States shall use its good offices and take appropriate measures to the end that the doors of Palestine shall be opened for free entry of Jews into that country, and that there shall be full opportunity for colonization so that the Jewish people may ultimately reconstitute Palestine as a free and democratic Jewish Commonwealth.²¹⁹

While hearings were held on these resolutions in the U.S. House, however, the committee decided that, “actions upon the resolution at this time would be unwise” after receiving a letter from Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson. The Stimson letter read in part “it is the considered judgment of the War Department that without reference to the merits of these resolutions, further action on them at this time would be prejudicial to the successful

²¹⁸ Wyman, David S. The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984)

²¹⁹ Fink, Reuben. America and Palestine: The Attitude of Official America and of the American People Toward the Rebuilding of Palestine as a Free and Democratic Jewish Commonwealth. (New York: American Zionist Emergency Council, 1944): 79. Reported in the House as H. Res. 418 and H. Res. 419.

prosecution of the war.”²²⁰ While no explicit reason is given, it can be presumed that a Congressional resolution in support of Zionism would have caused anger in the Arab world which the Roosevelt administration assumed could be harmful to the war effort.

During 1941 and early 1942, Zionist leader David Ben-Gurion came to Washington and spent 10 weeks attempting to get a meeting with President Roosevelt, but was repeatedly rebuffed.²²¹ By contrast, Roosevelt did meet quite famously with Saudi King Ibn Saud on February 14, 1945 following the Yalta Conference demonstrating that the primary American interest in the region was in petroleum. As one might expect, President Roosevelt was clearly pursuing U.S. strategic interests in meeting with the Saudi king. Roosevelt reportedly told the king that he would “do nothing to assist the Jews against the Arabs and would make no move hostile to the Arab people”²²² Roosevelt clearly saw no similar strategic interest in supporting the Zionist efforts to establish a state in Palestine and a significant strategic interest in courting Saudi Arabia.

²²⁰ Fink, Reuben. America and Palestine: 84.

²²¹ Frankel, Glenn. “A Beautiful Friendship?: In Search of the truth about the Israel Lobby’s Influence on Washington.” Washington Post Magazine, July 16, 2006, page W13)
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/07/12/AR2006071201627.html>

²²² Lippman, Thomas W. Inside the Mirage: America’s Fragile Partnership with Saudi Arabia. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2004): 29. Lippman’s account is taken from William A. Eddy, F.D.R. Meets Ibn Saud (New York: American Friends of the Middle East, 1954). More detail is available in Lacey, Robert. The Kingdom: Arabia & the House of Sa’ud (New York: Avon Books, 1981): 268-275.

Truman and the Founding of Israel, 1948. Following the end of the Second World War and the death of Franklin Roosevelt and the startling public revelation of the death and devastation in the Nazi Concentration Camps, President Truman took a very different approach that explicitly rejected Roosevelt's promise. During the autumn of 1945, Truman met with Saudi and other Arab diplomats in Washington and is alleged to have told them, "I'm sorry gentlemen...but I have to answer to hundreds of thousands who are anxious for the success of Zionism; I do not have the hundreds of thousands of Arabs among my constituents."²²³ Truman himself would later deny that his views on Israel were shaped by domestic political considerations, which would seem to contradict the possibility that he would so bluntly blame domestic politics for his actions. Whether these words attributed to Truman are literally true or apocryphal attribution is less important than the complex political nexus around the U.S.-Israel relationship that such comments hint at. The question of how much domestic political considerations have shaped American policy towards Israel has remained a core element in the relationship ever since. The U.S.-Israel relationship had clearly begun to take on a domestic political element that involved consideration of Jewish opinion under Truman that had been essentially absent under President Roosevelt. This was the beginning of a long transformation of American policy that would take a generation to complete.

²²³ Eddy, William A. F.D.R. Meets Ibn Saud. (New York: American Friends of the Middle East, Inc., 1954): 37. This quote is obviously controversial, according to The Link. (Volume 38, Issue 2, April/May, 2005): 13, Eddy is the "sole source" for this controversial quote. http://www.ameu.org/uploads/vol38_issue2_2005.pdf

The Truman administration certainly took several positions more sympathetic to Zionist aims than the Roosevelt administration. On October 4, 1946, Truman endorsed a recommendation of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry to allow 100,000 Jewish refugees from Europe to immigrate to Palestine. In November, 1947, the Truman administration supported the UN partition plan, and on May 14, 1948, President Truman ordered the immediate recognition of the Jewish state. Each time, he overruled significant objections from the Arabist faction within his administration associated with Secretary of State George Marshall and Secretary of Defense James Forrestal. There is certainly a record of extensive Zionist lobbying of Truman during this period, although it is not clear how effective it was since there are numerous reports that much of it annoyed Truman who is reported to have shouted at one meeting in 1946: “They [The Zionists] somehow expect me to fulfill all the prophecies of the prophets. I tell them sometimes that I can no more fulfill all the prophecies of Ezekiel than I can that other great Jew, Karl Marx.”²²⁴ Zvi Ganin notes that the Zionist lobbying “lacked the capacity for sustained effort against the formidable array of antagonists in and out of the Truman administration.”²²⁵

To this day, President Truman’s decision to recognize Israel on May 14, 1948 remains a controversial microcosm of the U.S.-Israel relationship containing all of the

²²⁴ Benson, Michael T. Harry S. Truman and the Founding of Israel. (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997): 91. Benson is quoting Ernest’s Bevin’s report of the meeting, December 8, 1946, PRO, FO 371/61762. Brackets added for clarification.

themes that have continued to define debates about the motivations of U.S. policy ever since. Secretary of State George Marshall and most of the leading members of the foreign policy establishment vehemently opposed President Truman's decision to recognize Israel. They argued that they should side with the Arabs and refuse to recognize the Jewish state. They argued that recognizing Israel would undermine U.S. strategic interests in the region and endanger American access to Middle Eastern oil reserves in the emerging context of the early Cold War. Marshall believed that Truman's decision was made on the basis of domestic political consideration to attain Jewish support in the 1948 Presidential election. Marshall's official biographer, Forrest Pogue, writes that: "At times, because of the necessity emphasized by White House advisors of winning the fall election, the White House became in effect the foreign office of the State of Israel."²²⁶

Clark Clifford, Truman's domestic policy advisor, who was the leading advocate for recognition within the administration, insisted that Truman's decision was made on the basis of strategic, moral, ethical, religious, and humanitarian reasons or domestic politics.²²⁷ Clifford argues that Truman was influenced by his sympathy for the Jews in

²²⁵ Ganin, Zvi. Truman, American Jewry, and Israel, 1945-1948. (New York: HM Publishers, 1979): xv-xvi.

²²⁶ Snetsinger, John. Truman, the Jewish Vote, and the Creation of Israel. (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1974) and Marshall's official biographer Pogue, Forrest C. George C. Marshall: Statesman, 1945-59. (New York: Penguin Books, 1987): 336-378. Quote, Pogue: 374-375.

the wake of the Holocaust and by his belief that among those left homeless by World War II, “the Jews had no homeland of their own to which they could return.” Clifford wrote that from Truman’s “reading of the Old Testament he felt the Jews derived a legitimate historical right to Palestine.” Clifford also argued that strategically in the Cold War context that in such an unstable, undemocratic region, “it is important for the long-range security of our country and indeed the world that a nation committed to the democratic system be established there, one on which we can rely.”²²⁸ Clifford would further conclude in his autobiography, “Although domestic considerations are in fact a legitimate part of any important foreign policy decision, I never rested the case for recognition upon politics.”²²⁹ Clifford argues accurately that at the time the American Jewish community was deeply divided on the Zionist question and that there was no foreseeable political benefit to Truman in recognizing Israel. Truman would go on to win an estimated 90% of the Jewish vote in his razor thin victory in 1948 (just as FDR had in 1944). Analytically, it remains difficult to judge whether Truman’s decision to recognize Israel played any significant role with a constituency that strongly supported Truman’s New Deal economic policies. It is even more difficult to determine whether Truman and his advisors would have reasonably anticipated any political gains from such a policy given

²²⁷ This view is confirmed by Benson, Michael T. Harry S. Truman and the Founding of Israel. (Praeger, Westport, 1997)

²²⁸ Clifford, Clark. Counsel to the President: A Memoir. (New York: Random House, 1991): 8-12.

²²⁹ Clifford: 24.

the existing divisions within the Jewish community over Zionism. Truman ultimately lost New York to New York Gov. Thomas Dewey, but John Snetsinger notes that Truman won Illinois, Ohio, and California – states with significant Jewish populations -- by slim margins.²³⁰

Snetsinger concludes that Truman's motives were entirely political, he writes that:

[Truman's] "...policies were in accord with the Zionists' program, he was motivated primarily, if not solely, by political exigencies. With all its contradictions and vacillations, Truman's Palestine-Israel policy offers an extraordinary example of foreign policy conducted in line with short-range political expediency rather than long-range national goals."²³¹

Michael Benson disagrees arguing that: "Truman emerges from the historical record as a man acting out of moral, ethical, and sympathetic impulses on behalf of a persecuted minority despite both international and domestic strategy arguments made to the contrary by those whom he most respected and trusted."²³²

Thus the complex set of competing explanations that has shaped much of the debate of U.S. policy around Israel for nearly 60 years is visible at this crucial formative stage of the relationship. To what degree was Truman's key decision shaped by strategic concerns as compared to domestic politics and humanitarian motivations? The

²³⁰ Snetsinger: 134. Truman won Ohio by 3554 votes, California by 8933 votes, and Illinois by 16,807 votes.

²³¹ Snetsinger: 140. See also Wilson, Evan M. Decision on Palestine: How the U.S. Came to Recognize Israel. (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1979) Wilson agrees largely with Snetsinger's interpretation. Brackets added for clarification.

²³² Benson: 196

competing explanations suggest that as in almost any policy nexus that all the different factors were involved, but discerning which were primary is extremely difficult. It's also likely that different policy actors had different combinations of motivations. One policy actor's perception of another's motivations was likely colored by their own. Marshall and some of his supporters perceived Truman's motivations to be political, but Truman and his supporters publicly claimed their motivations were humanitarian, strategic and cultural. Some of Truman's supporters occasionally perceived some of Marshall's supporters as being anti-Semitic. Policy actors tend to want to remember their own contributions in the most positive light and those who disagreed with them in the most negative light. Each policymaker's memory is also likely to be colored by the passage of time and the influence of later events. Thus we are left with many questions, but few clear explanations of why the Truman administration acted as it did.

A Non-Strategic Relationship, 1948-1958. The issues during the next decade seem somewhat clearer. During the next decade during the 2nd Truman and 1st Eisenhower terms, the U.S. policy towards Israel took a much more strategic approach. While the Truman administration eventually shifted its recognition of Israel from *de facto* to *de jure*, it never established a close alliance or relationship with Israel. It established and continued to enforce an arms embargo on both Israel and its Arab adversaries. While the Truman administration did provide a small amount of foreign aid to Israel -- about

\$65 million for refugee resettlement in 1951²³³ -- it did not provide significant diplomatic or political support for Israel during this period. Nor was the rhetoric of the relationship was not particularly warm and friendly.

This trend continued under Eisenhower²³⁴ who seemed to lack Truman's personal and political connections to the Jewish community. President Eisenhower, like General Marshall, held a soldier's view and had not spent a lifetime in the world of partisan politics. His approach was, not surprisingly, much more the result of strategic rather than a political frame of reference. By this time, the Cold War had taken center stage and the young Israeli state had little to strategic value to offer the United States. The U.S. government was focused on maintaining the support of Arab governments against Soviet encroachment in the region. This included the U.S.-U.K. covert effort to overthrow Iran's reformist Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh in 1953 and the formation of the Central Treaty Organization with Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan, and Iran. By 1954, the Eisenhower administration started to provide arms to Iraq as part of its Cold War strategy.²³⁵ Alteras describes U.S.-Israel relations in the following terms:

²³³ see I.L. Kenen. Israel's Defense Line: Her Friends and Foes in Washington. (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1981): 94.

²³⁴ Recent accounts of Eisenhower administration and its policy towards Israel include: Alteras, Isaac. Eisenhower and Israel: U.S.-Israeli Relations. (Gainesville: FL, University of Florida Press, 1993); Ben-Zvi, Abraham. Decade of Transition: Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the Origins of American-Israeli Alliance (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998) ; and Levy, Zach. Israel and the Western Powers, 1952-1960. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997)

²³⁵ Kenen: 122

Generally speaking, the attitudes of Eisenhower and Dulles toward Israel were devoid of sentimentalism. Their attitudes were rooted in practical interests, in how support for Israel served U.S. national interests in the context of the cold war competition with the Soviet Union. From their perspective, morality went only as far as keeping the commitment for Israel's existence, but it did not require supporting Israel's case in the dispute with its Arab neighbors.²³⁶

Interestingly enough, Israel's primary Western ally and arms supplier in the 1950s was France which was engaged in a battle with Arab nationalist forces in Algeria, supported by Nasser's Egypt, and saw Israel as a useful ally.

While there were, of course, small scale and individual efforts to lobby the Truman and Eisenhower administrations, the lobbying institutions of the Jewish community were at this point in their formative stages and were not yet particularly effective. In 1951, I.L. Kenen had established the American Zionist Committee which would be renamed as the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) in 1959, but it would take a quarter century to truly emerge as one of the most powerful lobbies in Washington.²³⁷ In 1956, apparently at the suggestion of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, who wanted to be able to speak to one Jewish voice instead of being barraged by dozens, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish organizations was established under the leadership of Yehuda Hellman. It too remained a fairly weak

²³⁶ Alteras: 318.

²³⁷ For background, see I.L. Kenen. Israel's Defense Line: Her Friends and Foes in Washington. (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1981)

organization until Hellman's death in 1986.²³⁸ While the seeds of what would become influential Jewish lobbying organizations had been planted, it would take a generation for those seeds to flower.

In this phase of the relationship, President Truman imposed an arms embargo on Israel -- as well as its Arab adversaries -- in an effort to stop the fighting in the Middle East. During the 1953 water crisis and the Suez crisis, the Eisenhower administration imposed sanctions on Israel to force it to comply with U.S. demands. In 1953, the U.S. supported a U.N. Security Council resolution 101 condemning Israel's raid against the village of Qibya in the then-Jordanian West Bank.²³⁹ The U.S. also temporarily suspended economic aid to Israel. The key event of this period was the October/November 1956 Suez Crisis in which France, Great Britain, and Israel invaded the Sinai Peninsula in an attempt to overturn Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal and reassert the influence of the fading colonial powers in the region. This attack was launched without prior consultation with the United States. The tripartite invasion succeeded militarily in occupying the Sinai Peninsula, but infuriated President Eisenhower. The Eisenhower administration came down strongly against the invasion and pressured Israel with the threat of sanctions to withdraw from the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip in early 1957. A United Nations peacekeeping force was assigned to the

²³⁸ Massing, Michael "Deal Breakers." The American Prospect (Volume 13, Issue 5, March 11, 2002)

²³⁹ The Israeli commander of the Qibya raid was future Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

Peninsula to separate Israel and Egypt in hopes of preventing further hostilities. These events are historically significant, because it is the strongest position that any American President has ever taken in opposition to action by an Israeli government. After the Suez crisis, Israel gradually moved towards an operation assumption that maintaining a good relationship with the United States was vital prerequisite for Israel's security.

Bar-Siman-Tov notes that Eisenhower's administration "uniformly considered Israel a hindrance to U.S. political and security interests in the Middle East and elsewhere.... The divergence of interests prevented establishment of a special relationship, security cooperation, arms supply, or substantial economic aid."²⁴⁰ Ben-Zvi adds that during Eisenhower's first term, "the landscape of U.S.-Israeli relations was clouded by incompatible negotiating strategies, which reflected in turn fundamentally different priorities, concerns and objectives"²⁴¹ It seems fair to say that the Truman administration and the first Eisenhower administration were primarily operating on the basis of a strategic analysis of U.S. interests in line with the realist interpretation of policy-making. U.S. policy during this period was substantially consistent across all issues of mutual concern. There is little evidence of policy compartmentalization that will typify later phases of the relationship. Nor was there much evidence of the "passionate attachment" that would later come to typify the relationship. This is in large

²⁴⁰ Bar-Siman-Tov. "The United States and Israel since 1948: A "Special Relationship." Diplomatic History. (Vol. 22, No. 2, Spring, 1998): 233.

²⁴¹ Ben-Zvi, Abraham. Decade of Transition Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the Origins of the American-Israeli Alliance. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998): 24.

part, because domestic politics had not become a major factor in shaping U.S. foreign policy on this issue during this period. While the Eisenhower administration came down hard on the Israelis in the context the Suez Crisis and showed no particular empathy for the Israel, Israel's military success against the Egyptians may have led them to begin to reconsider the growing military role that Israel could play as a regional strategic asset in the context of Middle East Cold War that was continuing to heat up.

The Emerging Strategic Relationship, 1958-1970. While Israel sought to develop a strategic relationship that involved arms sales and security guarantees from the United States during these years in the context of the Eisenhower Doctrine -- in which the U.S. promised to support countries threatened by communist aggression, the U.S. administration expressed little interest during its first term. The administration's goal remained seeking an Arab-Israeli peace, although it recognized that this was unrealistic. The administration saw Israel as pro-Western, but believed that getting too close to Israel would undermine its ties to Arab states in the region.

After Israel's impressive military performance during the Suez campaign, there is evidence that the administration began to alter its tune ever so slightly. By the late 1950s, Egypt and Syria were moving closer to the Soviet Union orbit. In July, 1958, Iraq's pro-Western King Faisal was killed as part of a Nasserist military coup. The U.S. sent 15,000 marines into Lebanon in response to a request by the Lebanese President to shore up the Lebanese regime. King Hussein's regime in Jordan, which was also threatened, was supported by British forces. Under these circumstances, the U.S. administration began a

process of re-evaluating Israel's strategic value to the U.S. Having failed to win over Egypt's Gamal Abdel-Nasser and facing a rising tide of Arab nationalism supported by the Soviet Union, the Eisenhower administration began to reconsider Israel's strategic value. Its approach remained entirely strategic, but the strategic calculus had changed enough to warrant a re-evaluation. For example, a 1958 memo prepared by the National Security Council argues very bluntly that: "If we choose to combat radical Arab nationalism and hold Persian Gulf oil by force if necessary, a logical corollary would be to support Israel as the only strong pro-West power left in the Near East."²⁴²

While much of the literature on this period has suggested that the Eisenhower administration remained at odds with Israel's strategic priorities throughout the administration and that the relationship only began to warm in the early Kennedy years -- primarily for political reasons to be discussed below -- declassified documents now suggest a different interpretation. The third phase, really a transitional phase, can probably be traced to approximately 1958 rather than 1962. According to Ben-Zvi's analysis, "the seeds of change in the very essence and intrinsic nature of American-Israeli relations had not only been planted [in the Second Eisenhower Administration, 1957-1961], but also had begun to bear fruit."²⁴³ Whereas, the Eisenhower and his advisors saw Israel as a strategic liability during the first term, by the last two years of the

²⁴² Keefer, Edward C. (Editor). Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Near East Region; Iraq Iran; Arabian Peninsula, Volume XII. "Issues Arising Out of the Situation in the Near East." (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1993): 119. Memo dated as July 28, 1958.

²⁴³ Ben-Zvi: 3. Brackets added for clarification.

administration, the strategic calculus appears to have changed. This reevaluation appears to be related to the Iraqi Revolution, the crisis in Jordan, and the U.S. intervention in the Lebanese Civil War -- all in 1958. The strategic calculus that had initially suggested that Israel was a liability that undermined U.S. access to Arab oil had begun to shift as the Eisenhower administration began, albeit cautiously, to view Israel as offering a potential Cold War strategic asset in a highly unstable region. As Arab nationalism began to be seen as a threat and an ally of the Soviet Union, democratic and politically stable Israel could, at least tentatively, be seen as having a strategic value in the Cold War. This reinforces a pattern that becomes more explicit in the 1970s and 1980s. At each new phase of the "special relationship" it is initially strengthened for strategic reasons and then reinforced and expanded for political and cultural reasons. The language of strategic decision-making has continued to frame decisions that are essential political and cultural, not strategic.

At this stage, the administration was beginning to view Israel as a potential strategic asset with the deterrence capability in the region. Nevertheless, U.S. policy towards Israel changed very slowly. The Eisenhower administration didn't make any significant arms sales to Israel although they seriously discussed selling Hawk anti-aircraft missiles to Israel in 1960. Ben-Zvi notes:

It is clear that the second half of the 1950s witnessed a progressive change in the American perception of Israel. With the initial vision of Israel as a strategic liability to American strategic designs receding into the background in the aftermath of the Jordanian Crisis of 1958, a new view had emerged, one that increasingly envisaged Israel as a potential asset of the U.S. by virtue of its ability to effectively deter the UAR [United Arab

Republic -- Egypt & Syria] from completely disrupting the Middle East balance of power.²⁴⁴

U.S. policy would continue to move in the direction of seeing Israel as the strategic asset over the next dozen years across four administrations from both parties. Change was gradual and evolutionary and motivated almost entirely by strategic concerns.

The tone of the U.S.-Israel relationship would take on much greater warmth during the Kennedy²⁴⁵/Johnson years (1961-1969). It is during this phase that politics begins to interact with strategic calculations although decision-making would remain primarily strategic. While the Kennedy administration's calculations remained primarily strategic, it understood that there were domestic political benefits with a key Democratic constituency and sought to benefit politically from those foreign policy decisions.

The manner and degree to which the Kennedy administration changed the U.S.-Israel relationship has been widely debated and, on occasion, like many issues around JFK, romanticized in the wake of Kennedy's untimely death. Warren Bass, for example, argues that:

²⁴⁴ Ben-Zvi. Decade of Transition: 95. Brackets added for clarification.

²⁴⁵ For Treatments of the Kennedy years see Bass, Warren. Support Any Friend: Kennedy's Middle East and the Making of the U.S.-Israeli Alliance. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Ben-Zvi, Abraham. John F. Kennedy and the Politics of Arms Sales to Israel. (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2002); Ben-Zvi, Abraham. Decade of Transition: Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the Origins of American-Israeli Alliance (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), Chapter IV; Gazit, Mordechai. President Kennedy's Policy Toward the Arab States and Israel: Analysis and Documents. (Tel Aviv, Israel: Shiloah Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University, 1983)

The thousand days of the Kennedy presidency were enough time for a series of important shifts on Middle Eastern affairs. The Kennedy administration removed several roadblocks to a full blown U.S.-Israel alliance.... [The Kennedy administration's actions] laid the foundations upon which presidents from Lyndon Johnson to George W. Bush could build. Harry Truman was the father of the U.S.-Israel special relationship; John Kennedy was the father of the U.S.-Israel alliance.²⁴⁶

Bass's comments seem to overstate the situation. No real "special relationship" existed after Truman's recognition of Israel. While the distinction is semantic, it is not clear if the changes that occurred in the Kennedy era reflect the creation of a full-fledged alliance. Rather, starting from the nadir of the Suez Crisis in 1956 there is a gradual upward progression in relations. President Kennedy lifted the arms embargo and authorized the first arms sale to Israel -- sale of defensive anti-aircraft Hawk missiles to Israel in 1962.²⁴⁷ In making this decision, Kennedy reversed a decision of the Eisenhower administration, which had considered and rejected the same proposal in 1960. While there are some indications that Kennedy was aware of the domestic political benefits of the arms sales to Israel and the benefits of timing the announcement before the 1962 midterm elections, there is little evidence that this was his primary motivation for the arms sales. On the other hand, Kennedy attempted to make a real and concerted effort to strengthen ties with Israel's greatest adversary, Nasser's Egypt. Kennedy was clearly

²⁴⁶ Bass: 246. Brackets added for clarification.

²⁴⁷ Until the 1960s, France was Israel's main weapons supplier. France was fighting rebel forces in Algeria (backed by Egyptian President Nasser) until the early 1960s. Thus France saw Israel as a natural strategic ally in this war. France may also have helped Israel construct its first nuclear weapons.

seeking “a balance of power” between Israel and Egypt – which was buying weapons from the Soviet Union.²⁴⁸

Kennedy also applied heavy pressure to Israel around the Israeli nuclear program at Dimona in line with the administration’s broad commitment to nuclear non-proliferation.²⁴⁹ The Kennedy administration felt that Israeli nuclear weapons development would be viewed negatively by the Arab states and could lead to a dangerous Cold War nuclear arms race in the region. Kennedy insisted on U.S. inspections of Dimona and even directly confronted Israel on this issue. In a now-declassified letter from Kennedy to Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, written on May 18, 1963, he wrote of that:

We are concerned with the disturbing effect on world stability which would accompany the development of a nuclear weapons capability by Israel. I cannot imagine the Arabs would refrain from turning to the Soviet Union for assistance if Israel were to develop a nuclear weapons capability – with all the consequences this would hold.... this country supports Israel in a wide variety of ways which are well known to both of us. This commitment and this support would be seriously jeopardized in public opinion in this country and in the West as a whole if it should be thought that this Government was unable to obtain reliable information on

²⁴⁸ Nadelman, Ethan. “Setting the Stage: American Policy toward the Middle East , 1961-66.” International Journal of Middle East Studies. (Vol. 14, No. 4, November, 1982): 436.

²⁴⁹ For full treatments of Israel’s nuclear development, see Hersh, Seymour M. The Sampson Option: Israel’s Nuclear Arsenal and American Foreign Policy. (New York: Random House, 1991) and Cohen, Avner. Israel and the Bomb. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998)

a subject as vital to peace as the question of the character of Israel's effort in the nuclear field.²⁵⁰

While the nuclear confrontation was eventually resolved, it was clear that Kennedy was more concerned about nuclear non-proliferation and its affects within the context of the Cold War than about any impact this might have in terms of domestic politics.

On December 27, 1962, Kennedy told Israeli Foreign Minister Golda Meir in a meeting in Palm Beach, FL, that the "special relationship with Israel in the Middle East [was] really comparable only to that which [the United States] has with Britain over a wide range of world affairs," and added that "in case of an invasion the United States would come to the support of Israel."²⁵¹ On May 8, 1963, Kennedy repeated his commitment to Israel's security in public somewhat obliquely at press conference when he responded that:

We support the security of both Israel and her neighbors. We seek to limit the Near East arms race which obviously takes resources from an area already poor, and puts them into an increasing race which does not really bring any great security. We strongly oppose the use of force or the threat of force in the Near East, and we also seek to limit the spread of communism in the Middle East which would, of course, destroy the independence of the people. This Government has been and remains as strongly opposed to the use of force or the threat of force in the Near East. In the event of aggression or preparation for aggression, whether direct or indirect, we would support appropriate measures in the United Nations, adopt other courses of action on our own to prevent or to put a stop to such

²⁵⁰ Bass: 216. Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963, Volume 18. (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1995): 543-544.

²⁵¹ Quoted in Nadelman: 441. Brackets in original quote.

aggression, which, of course, has been the policy which the United States²⁵² has followed for some time.

However, on October 2, 1963, just a few weeks before his assassination, Kennedy turned down Ben-Gurion's request for a formal U.S. Security guarantee in a letter to Ben-Gurion's successor, Levi Eshkol²⁵³ Kennedy thought that doing so might destabilize the region and instead stuck with "existing informal arrangements." While it is clear that Kennedy advanced the status of U.S.-Israeli relations, it was far from a full-scale alliance at the time of his death. While proponents of development of a close U.S.-Israel relationship clearly had more access to both the Kennedy administration and to Congress during this period, Ben-Zvi's quite fair analysis makes it "clear that cold and realistic calculations of the American national interest rather than idealistic notions and beliefs comprised, in the aggregate, the most powerful independent variable from which American policy in the Arab-Israeli sphere was continuously derived."²⁵⁴ The U.S.-Israel relationship had greatly expanded during the Kennedy years with the rhetoric of the alliance seeming to somewhat exceed the content as a result of the increasing political dimension of the relationship.

²⁵² Referenced by Nadelman: 441. Text from John F. Kennedy Library & Museum website.
http://www.jfklibrary.org/Historical+Resources/Archives/Reference+Desk/Press+Conferences/003POF05Pressconference55_05081963.htm

²⁵³ FRUS, 1961-1963, Volume 18: 720-722.

²⁵⁴ Ben-Zvi. Decade of Transition: 137.

Following Kennedy's sudden death, Lyndon B. Johnson suddenly succeeded to the Presidency. While there was certainly a change of style, the administration's approach to the Middle East remained pretty much along the lines laid out by the President Kennedy. President Lyndon Johnson, who saw Israel as a Cold War ally, continued to expanded American weapons sales to Israel. Of course, the issues of the Middle East would eventually be pushed to the back burner as the U.S. became increasingly entangled in the War in Vietnam. Doug Little argues that "Johnson seems to have taken vicarious pleasure from Israel's ability to thwart an Arab war of national liberation not unlike the one America faced in Vietnam."²⁵⁵ Never-the-less, as the U.S. efforts to reach out to Nasser met with growing frustration as Nasser drew closer to the Soviets, hardened Cold War allegiances seemed to dictate the strategic logic of a strengthened U.S.-Israel allegiance during this period. The Johnson administration continued to consolidate the U.S.-Israel alliance, which was both a strategically sound choice and good domestic politics for a Democratic President seeking to maintain his long-standing friendships in the Jewish community²⁵⁶ and long-standing ties to the emerging Israel lobby. More so than Kennedy, Johnson seemed to have deep personal and political ties to Israel and its supporters. He had, for example, opposed Eisenhower's

²⁵⁵ Little, Douglas. "The United States and Israel, 1957-68." International Journal of Middle East Studies. (Volume 25, Issue 4, November, 1993): 578.

²⁵⁶ President Johnson had long-standing ties to the Jewish community of central Texas dating back to his days in Congress. In November, 1963, Johnson was planning on traveling from Dallas to Austin to dedicate Congregation Agudas Achim. He, of course, canceled that trip following the Kennedy assassination, but returned to dedicate the sanctuary as President on December 30, 1963. <http://www.caa-austin.org/>

efforts to pressure Israel to withdraw from Sinai and Gaza in 1956-1957. In his memoirs, he writes that “I have always had a deep feeling of sympathy for Israel and its people, gallantly building and defending a modern nation against great odds and against the tragic background of the Jewish experience.”²⁵⁷

The Johnson administration authorized extensive weapons sales to Israel starting with M-48 tanks in 1965, A-4 Skyhawk Jets in 1966, and eventually F-4 Phantom Jets in 1968. But it did so in a context of trying to provide Israel with conventional deterrence capability in an attempt to prevent it from developing nuclear weapons. The administration believed that Israeli acquisition of nuclear weapons would further destabilize the region. The administration was also continuing to try to build a relationship with Nasser and began to supply arms to traditional Middle Eastern monarchies in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. While the administration was certainly pressured by the influence of the growing pro-Israel lobby on Capitol Hill, it was clearly continuing to act based on strategic Cold War considerations with little special consideration for Israel’s interests. The U.S. remained willing to criticize Israel. For example, in November, 1966, the Johnson administration – much as Eisenhower had done following the Qibya incident in 1953 -- supported U.N. Security Council resolution 228 condemning an Israeli raid on Jordanian-controlled West Bank village of Samu.

²⁵⁷ Johnson, Lyndon. The Vantage Point. (New York: Holt, Reinhart, and Winston, 1971): 297.

The contours of the entire conflict would be dramatically redefined by the events of the seminal year of 1967. Tensions between Israel and Egypt continued to build throughout the spring of 1967. The Johnson administration cautioned Levi Eshkol's government not to overreact and attempted to prevent an escalation of the conflict. However, on May 17, Nasser expelled the UN peacekeeping force and on May 22 Egypt closed the straits of Tiran – a move which Israel interpreted as an act of war. While the Johnson administration was still attempting to prevent a war, Israel opted to launch a pre-emptive attack on Egypt on June 5, followed by attacks on Jordan on June 6 and Syria on June 9. The Israelis would ultimately capture the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip from Egypt, Jerusalem and the West Bank from Jordan, and the Golan Heights from Syria. The United States efforts to prevent a full-scale war had failed.

The U.S. role in the Six-Day War remains controversial to this day as some have tried to argue that the U.S. green-lighted Israel's pre-emptive attack. William Quandt argues fairly persuasively that Johnson concluded a few days before the war, "that no purpose would be served any longer by trying to hold Israel back...As far as Johnson was concerned, Israel was, therefore, free to act, but on its own. The red light turned yellow - - but not quite green. For the Israeli cabinet, that was enough."²⁵⁸

The most intriguing and controversial episodes of the war remains Israel's June 8th bombing of the USS Liberty, an intelligence gathering ship, in which 34 American sailors were killed and 173 wounded. The major controversy around this incident

remains whether the Israeli attack was intentional, or as the Israel has always insisted, accidental. This remains unresolved and in some circles highly controversial and a source of a wide variety of contrasting speculative theories suggesting that Israel intentionally attacked the ship to prevent the U.S. from learning of its plans to attack the Golan Heights or some other goal.²⁵⁹ Whatever the truth about the Liberty incident, the reaction of the Johnson administration remains rather elucidating. President Johnson accepted Israel's apology, explanation, and compensation with little question or argument. This is an indication that, from his perspective, the emerging U.S.-Israel alliance was important enough that the administration had little interest in pressing for more information or clearer explanations of the tragedy. In his memoirs, Johnson spends only a few sentences on the Liberty incident and characterizes it as a "tragic accident."²⁶⁰

In the months following the Six-Day War, the administration continued to pressure Israel to on the issue of the territories captured during the war, on the need for Israel to accept U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 (November 22, 1967), on Israel's efforts to develop nuclear weapons, and its refusal to join the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty

²⁵⁸ Quandt, William B. "Lyndon Johnson and June 1967 War: What Color Was the Light?" Middle East Journal. (Vol. 46, No. 2, Spring, 1992): 228.

²⁵⁹ Ennes, James M. Assault on the Liberty: The True Story of the Israeli Attack on an American Intelligence Ship. (New York: Random House, 1979) Ennes was a junior officer on the USS Liberty at the time of the attack. See also Borne, John E. The USS Liberty: Dissenting History vs. Official History. (A Ph.D. Dissertation in History at the New York University, 1983); Oren, Michael B. "The 'USS Liberty': Case Closed." Azure (Spring, 2000)

²⁶⁰ Johnson, Lyndon. Vantage Point : 300-301, 304.

(NPT). Despite political pressures to do so before the American election, Johnson did not approve the sale of F-4 Phantom Jets until November 25, 1968 – several weeks after Richard Nixon’s victory over Vice-President Hubert Humphrey. This suggests that Johnson was trying to keep politics out of the decision. It is widely believed that Israel finished its secret development of nuclear weapons during the period – roughly 1968 to 1970. The U.S. efforts to provide Israel with conventional weapons to provide it with a non-nuclear deterrent capability therefore failed to keep Israel from developing nuclear weapons.²⁶¹ While the special relationship did not emerge fully during this transitional period, the strategic calculus had been changed by Israel’s dramatic victory in the Six-Day War. Bar-Siman-Tov notes that the “1967 War marks the first time in the relationship that U.S. and Israeli political and security interests significantly converged.”²⁶²

Over roughly the next decade, the capture of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the passage of UNSC 242 would be part of the gradual transformation of the conflict from an Arab-Israeli conflict to an Israeli-Palestinian conflict over how to create a Palestinian state in the Occupied Territories. This would necessarily also transform the role that the United States played in the conflict. Ever since the Six-Day War each U.S.

²⁶¹ Cohen, Avner. Israel and the Bomb. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998). Cohen’s book is considered a seminal work on the development of Israel’s nuclear weapons program.

²⁶² Bar-Siman-Tov. “The United States and Israel since 1948: A “Special Relationship.”” Diplomatic History. (Vol. 22, No.2, Spring, 1998): 40.

administration, some actively, some merely rhetorically, has attempted to play some sort of role in resolving the conflict on the understanding that doing so was in national interest of the United States.

Nixon/Ford/Kissinger/Carter, 1970s. The Nixon administration inherited the growing U.S.-Israel relationship in 1969. William Quandt, a former National Security Council staff member, writes that before 1970, the U.S. pursued a relatively even-handed zero-sum Cold War policy designed in the belief that

American support for Israel was an impediment to U.S.-Arab relations... [and that] by granting economic and military aid to the enemy of the Arabs, the United States was providing the Soviet Union with an opportunity to extend its influence in the Middle East.... In this view, Israel was more of an embarrassment for United States policy than a strategic asset. Even if Israel was an impressive military power, that power could be used only to defend Israel, not to advance American interests elsewhere in the region.²⁶³

Nixon and Kissinger would transform the U.S.-Israel alliance into the early phase of what has become known as the “Special Relationship.” They did so as part of Henry Kissinger’s Realpolitik approach in the context of the Cold War. In the process Nixon and Kissinger constructed an alliance that while initially built on strategic imperatives of the Cold War has been able to long survive and grow long after the dissolution of the Soviet threat that it was intended to counter. Unlike the previous Democratic administrations, they received few votes from the Jewish community and did not have a strong political interest in the Jewish vote.

²⁶³ Quandt, William. Decade of Decisions: American Policy Toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict. 1967-1976. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1977): 120.

The administration's initial foray into the conflict involved the Rogers Plan (December, 1969), which was an attempt to implement UNSC 242. This, however, was scuttled by the 1970 War of Attrition and Israeli refusal to accept a full withdrawal from the Occupied Territories. At this time, the administration viewed Israel as an emerging strategic asset, as had the Johnson administration, but not one of special importance. The key turning point was the Black September crisis of 1970 in which a civil war between Jordan's King Hussein and Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) threatened the survival of the pro-Western regime in Jordan. Jordan was faced with the threat of an invasion by the pro-Soviet Syrian regime in support of the PLO. Israel made the historic decision to mobilize its force against the threat of a potential Syrian invasion and in support of the Jordanian monarchy. The crisis didn't last long. Syria opted to withdraw its forces and not to engage its air force rather than confront Israel, which had badly defeated it three years earlier. While Israeli forces did not ultimately engage in the conflict, the Israeli action helped to stabilize the situation and resolve the crisis in a manner that was beneficial to the United States. It was the first time that Israeli forces had been mobilized in support of U.S. strategic interests in the region and it changed Nixon and Kissinger's view of the strategic situation and led them to reevaluate Israel's importance as a vital strategic asset in the Middle East in the context of the Cold War.

The Nixon administration now believed that Israel provided the U.S. with a highly-skilled and rapidly deployable force in a region whose stability was critical to the American position in the Cold War. Along with the Shah's Iran, which was attempting to

fill the strategic vacuum left by the British withdrawal from the Persian Gulf, Israel emerged in the early 1970s a leading American ally in the region. Following the Jordanian crisis, the United States rapidly expanded economic and military assistance, arms sales and strategic cooperation with Israel. U.S. Aid to Israel skyrocketed from roughly \$100 million to roughly \$1 billion annually.²⁶⁴ (See Appendix A for foreign aid figures.)

As Donald Neff writes:

[T]he historic argument of whether Israel was a strategic ally was substantially won by Kissinger. After this, relations between Israel and successive administration grew progressively warmer and American largess more generous. A new strategic relationship between the United States and Israel, which was finally signed formally in 1983 was well on the way to reality after Black September....The destinies of the United States and Israel were now irretrievably intermixed in the Middle East.²⁶⁵

At this time, U.S. policy towards Israel began to be compartmentalized for the first time. Short-term Cold War strategic interests outweighed the U.S.'s longer-term interest in stabilizing the region through a comprehensive peace settlement. Thus the value of Israel as a strategic asset outweighed the difficulties caused by Israel's policies of building settlements in the territories occupied during the 1967 war. While the Nixon administration opposed these policies -- which ran counter to international law -- it did

²⁶⁴ U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel before 1970 averaged \$65 million per year, only equaled or exceeded \$100 million-a-year four times, and never exceeded \$161 million per-year. Between 1971-78, U.S. aid to Israel averaged \$1.37 billion and always exceeded \$480 million per-year. Between 1979-90, U.S. aid to Israel averaged \$3.2 billion and always exceeded \$2.1 billion per year. Data compiled from chart in Aruri: 86. See also Appendix A.

²⁶⁵ Neff, Donald. "The Beginnings of the U.S. Strategic Cooperation with Israel." American-Arab Affairs. (No. 2, Summer, 1987): 86.

little to compel Israel to change them. On the contrary, the U.S. continued to increase foreign aid and strategic cooperation with Israel. Israel's value to the U.S. was more important than implementing the soon-forgotten Rogers Peace Plan which was essentially shelved when it became clear that the Israeli government would not accept it. Thus those policies that developed Israel's ability to act as a Cold War strategic asset -- that is, Henry Kissinger's approach -- overshadowed those which favored pursuing a comprehensive peace settlement -- that is, Secretary of State William Rogers's approach.

By the second term Kissinger would officially replace Rogers as Secretary of State (while still wearing the hat of National Security Advisor as well). While Israel had entered the early stage of a "special relationship" with the United States at this point, the primary rationale at this stage remained strategic, not political. There is little indication that domestic politics or Kissinger's Jewish heritage played any significant role in these events in Kissinger's evaluation that Israel had emerged as a strategic asset, although, of course, observers are free to speculate about what went on, consciously and subconsciously, inside Kissinger's head.

The Nixon/Kissinger administration would also stand by the Israel during the dark days of the 1973 Yom Kippur War in which a surprise attack posed a grave threat to Israel. A U.S. supply airlift would eventually prove vital to turning the tide in that war. While the United States has continued for decades to attempt to mediate the peace process, its strategic alliance with Israel has made it increasingly difficult for the U.S. to play the role of even-handed mediator. In becoming Israel's ally and indeed its protector, a process began in which the view that Israel as an important strategic ally would come to

eventually overshadow concerns about the Middle East peace process. These two areas of concern would eventually be completely separated into different intellectual compartments.

While the decision to see Israel as a key strategic ally deserving of immense amounts of foreign aid and diplomatic support appears to have been based primarily on strategic concerns, there is evidence that political concerns about the Jewish community were present at least in the thinking of the Republican National Committee. A March, 1970 memo from Warren Adler to Nixon's Domestic Policy Advisor Leonard Garment - - discovered in the National Archives and perhaps never before published -- paints a fascinating honest portrait of the role of the Jewish community and its reactions around Israel. Adler writes:

The Pompidou affair²⁶⁶ points up a glaring gap both in our method and manner of communication. It also indicates an unawareness of the strengths, weaknesses, and character of the American Jewish Community, a complex organism of almost unlimited vitality and special expertise in working with media that is underestimated time and time again by parties in power.

Among the multitude of national and local Jewish groups, there are sub-groups, dissident groups, and anti-dissident groups, all somehow inter-related and vocal, producing a never-ending cacophony of sounds that give one the impression that there is no real agreement within the total structure. It is deceiving because it is quite true.

EXCEPT ON THE QUESTION OF ISRAEL!

²⁶⁶ This refers to an incident in which the French President Georges Pompidou criticized Israel and drew angry protests from the American Jews during a March, 1970, visit to the United States. See "Pompidou Postscripts." Time Magazine. (March 16, 1970). This article is posted on the web at: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/printout/0,8816,909058,00.html>

When Israel is threatened, American Jews – indeed, world Jewry – reacts like a porcupine: lethal quills go up and all the motor reflexes and energy, physical and cosmic, goes into the business of self-protection at all cost. This manifestation has clearly been operative in the Pompidou affair. The reactions of the State of Israel are basically part of the same reflex. Call it over-sensitivity if you will, but like Pavlov’s dog, it is easily predictable.

In this reflex is a special potency that cannot be overlooked. It can make itself felt in Congress, in the media, and in other countries. Experience, expertise, influence and affluence are its characteristics – a tough combination to counter. That is why I have always maintained that this group does deserve some special attention, far beyond its numbers. For the fact is that Jewish parochial interests in this country, in the context of today’s world, have – as we discovered last weekend – important international implications.

Indeed, the American Jewish Community is unique in that it is the only recognizable group of Americans who actively and effectively lobby for a foreign government. And it does this with a minimum of hang-ups about dual loyalty and with a positive conviction that the personal safety of every Jew in the world is somehow irrevocably tied to the fate of Israel.

With such an articulate, passionate, dedicated “lobby” in this country, it is most difficult to conduct foreign policy in the Middle East along lines that are unacceptable to the Israelis. It may be argued that what is good for Israel may not necessarily be good for the United States. To a sophisticated American Jew of strong ethnic identification, against the tapestry of today’s international alignments, such an argument has little effect.

Fortunately, the aspirations of Israel, American Jews, and this Administration are fundamentally parallel. The President has been, in my opinion, exemplary in his public and private attitude towards Israel....

Summary: Because of the ramifications of the international situation, the Jewish community must be considered formidable.

Appropriate steps must be taken to meet the challenges of dialogue, confrontation and understanding with the Jewish community through a visible White House conduit with credibility, clout, and public visibility.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁷ Untitled Republican National Committee Memo from Warren Adler to Leonard Garment, March 9, 1970. The memo was discovered by the author in Leonard Garment's files in the Nixon Papers at the National Archives in 2002. Garment was at the

This memo is a strong indication that even an administration that had been elected with very little of the Jewish vote was beginning to realize that the political influence and potency of the Jewish community. The description is one that has, if anything, become more truthful in the decades since Adler wrote it. While it's unclear who actually read this particular memo, it is clearly indicative of the changing thinking about the role that the Jewish community would play in shaping foreign policy for decades to come. It also makes clear that during this period there was great continuity between the administration's view of its strategic interests and its goal of pleasing an increasingly influential and outspoken ethnic interest group.

Between 1970 and the Yom Kippur War, there was little strategic downside for the Nixon administration in supporting Israel and doing little to advance the Middle East peace process. This changed dramatically when American support for Israel in the Yom Kippur War resulted in Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPAC) which lasted from October, 1973 to March, 1974. The economic effects were dramatic, including a quadrupling of the price of petroleum and leading to inflation and recession. The Oil Embargo also made clear to the Nixon administration that the strategic balance had changed and that unfettered support for Israel could have serious negative political and economic costs.

The view of Israel as a strategic asset appears to have emerged as a result of a unique set of post-1967 circumstances. Kissinger's assessment of Israel's strategic value

time this was written was special consultant to the President for domestic policy and later served as White House Counsel. Adler was on the staff of the Republican National

did not survive the 1973 Yom Kippur War and the resulting oil embargo. In Secretary of State Kissinger's mind, Israel was no longer the crucial strategic asset that she had appeared to be in the early 1970s; Israel had again become more of a strategic liability as well as a partially counterbalancing strategic asset. The Israeli alliance was only valuable to Kissinger, in this stage, if Israel followed policies which helped move towards a regional peace settlement. The new strategic balance would result in a more active engaged U.S. role in the peace process which would last through the remainder of the decade. Henry Kissinger engaged in shuttle diplomacy over the next several years leading initially to ceasefire agreements between Israel, Egypt, and Syria during 1974-75. When peace talks between Israel and Egypt collapsed in early 1975 due to Israeli intransigence, President Ford and Kissinger launched a 3-month "reassessment" of U.S.-Israeli relations in order to pressure Israel to be more flexible. Following the reassessment, Kissinger resumed his diplomatic efforts leading to the Israeli-Egyptian Sinai II agreement which was signed in Geneva on September 4, 1975.

For the most part, the Carter Administration (1977-81) seemed to pick up where Kissinger left off. President Carter was also willing to pressure Israel in order to convince Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin to agree to the Camp David agreement with Egypt. Both Kissinger and Carter viewed the importance of achieving regional peace as more significant than maintaining a friendly non-confrontational relationship with Israel. American policy from 1974 to 1978 appears to have been strategically consistent and essentially non-compartmentalized. While Israel had a so-called "special

Committee.

relationship” with the United States in terms of foreign aid and weapons acquisition, this did not overshadow the American goal of stabilizing the region through a comprehensive peace settlement. During this period, the U.S. commitment to Israeli security actually acted to promote the peace process, because it allowed Israel to concede land to its Arab adversaries knowing that the United States remained its defender of last resort. There is little indication that Carter’s born-again Christianity made him any more sympathetic to the Israel goals although his most recent book indicates that his faith has a lot to do with his sympathy for his post-Presidential sympathy for the Palestinian cause.²⁶⁸

The election of new leadership in Israel and United States did not significantly change the nature of the U.S.-Israel relationship. President Carter continued to press the peace process despite and the negative and angry reaction of the Jewish community, which cost him politically. President Carter chose to overlook the political consequences and pursue the U.S. strategic interest in Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He engaged the peace process more directly and personally than any previous American President by convening the Camp David summit (September 5-17, 1978) between Begin and Sadat and pressing both sides to make concessions that resulted in the Camp David Accord and eventually a complete Israeli pullout from the Sinai Peninsula. The accord also included clauses in which Israel agreed to begin negotiating an autonomy agreement with the Palestinians. One of the results of Camp David was a vast increase in Foreign Aid so that Israel would begin to get roughly \$3 billion-a-year from United State (and Egypt about \$2 billion).

²⁶⁸ Carter, Jimmy. Palestine Peace Not Apartheid. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006)

As part of the process of trying to appease the Jewish community and sure up political support from key segment of the Democratic base, President Carter made an effort to try to empathize with the concerns of the Jewish community. At a White House ceremony marking Israel's 30th Birthday (on May 1, 1978), President Carter announced his plan to create the National Commission on the Holocaust (which was established by Executive Order on November 1, 1978). The creation of the President's Commission on the Holocaust eventually led to the creation of the United States Holocaust Museum which opened in 1993. The Museum was built not in New York, America's largest Jewish city, but in Washington, DC close to in America's most sacred political space. Edward Linenthal notes that:

The choice of the national's capital would prove fortuitous. A museum built in New York, even if national in intent, would clearly be perceived as a Jewish museum built in the heart of the Jewish community in America. Memory of the Holocaust would remain the province of American Jews. A national museum in Washington, on the other hand, made a more expansive – and controversial – claim on memory.²⁶⁹

The decision to build the museum as part of America's sacred space began a process by which memory of the Holocaust was both institutionalized and Americanized within the American historical experience. Carter also created the Department of Justice Office of Special Investigations in 1979 to investigate and prosecute Nazi War Crimes. In so doing, he created two institutions, it would seem quite unintentionally, that have

²⁶⁹ Linenthal, Edward. "Locating Holocaust Memory: The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum." American Sacred Space. (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995): 225.

helped to cement a special connection to Jewish suffering, which has served to institutionalize a special connection between the United States and the State of Israel.

As described above, this period marks a vortex of crucial cultural change in the United States: the decline of anti-Semitism and the assertion of political influence by the Jewish community, the increased fascination with the Holocaust, the rise of the religious right, and increased fear of Islam -- as a result of the terrorism, Iranian Revolution, and Iran Hostage Crisis. All of these changes, combined with the post-Watergate changes in the campaign financing laws, which served to further empower the Jewish community, would also transform the U.S.-Israel relationship during the Reagan administration.

Reagan Administration, 1980s. The carefully calibrated balance that promoted forward progress towards peace seemed to change in the years after the signing of the Camp David Accords (1979-82). American foreign aid to Israel (and Egypt) increased dramatically as a result of the Camp David Accords. The 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran resulted in the ouster of the Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, America's strongest and most trusted ally in the region. Also, changes on the American domestic political scene were setting the scene for a different type of relationship to emerge. President Reagan commented that, "The fall of Iran had increased Israel's value as perhaps the only remaining strategic asset in the region on which United States can truly rely."²⁷⁰ In addition, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (December, 1979) resulted in the end of détente and the renewal of the Cold War in last year of the Carter Administration.

²⁷⁰ Spiegel. "Israel as a Strategic Asset." Arab-Israeli Relations in World Politics. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994): 339. Reprinted from Commentary (June, 1983).

The new stage of the Cold War further escalated with the election of President Ronald Reagan whose administration was strongly committed to a much more aggressive policy of confronting the “Evil Empire.” Also, the Iranian revolution had increased concern about the danger of an anti-American Islamic fundamentalist movement that could threaten U.S. interests and access to oil in the Middle East.

It is in this period of strategic reassessment in the early 1980s that the U.S.-Israel relationship transitions to the fifth phase. In the early days of the U.S.-Israel relationship and even through the first decade or so of the “special relationship,” the United States government was able to use its overwhelming power advantage to force the Israeli government to make strategic concessions in the peace process. In 1957, before the development of the “special relationship,” President Dwight D. Eisenhower was able to use American diplomatic pressure to force Israel to give up the gains that it had made in the Sinai Peninsula during the 1956 War with Egypt. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Israel’s strategic dominance in the region and Arab intransigence seemed to justify American deference on the peace process. In 1975, President Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger were able to use threat of a “reassessment” of the U.S.-Israel relationship and a freeze on arms sales to cajole the Israeli government to agree to the second disengagement agreement with Egypt. In 1978, President Carter was able to use American influence along with the promise of a substantial increase in American foreign aid to convince Prime Minister Menachem Begin to agree to make significant concessions. Begin ultimately agreed to the return of the entire Sinai Peninsula and reluctantly agreed to accept clauses pertaining to the granting of autonomy to the

Palestinian population in the Occupied Territories. These events basically conform to the realist paradigm and its explanation of power politics.

However, during the Reagan Administration, the Israeli government was often able to act unilaterally against American interests without suffering serious consequences. Israel's decision to bomb the Iraqi nuclear reactor at Osirak (June, 1981) and to annex the Golan Heights (December, 1981) did not result in any serious sanctions against Israel. The U.S. verbally criticized Israeli actions, but took no steps to encourage a change in attitude or approach -- beyond a brief suspension of a recently signed memorandum of strategic cooperation following the annexation of Golan. Nor did the Israeli invasion of Lebanon (June, 1982) significantly damage the alliance or result in a major application of U.S. pressure on Israel to withdraw from Lebanon. U.S. attempts to break the deadlock between Israel and the Palestinians (the 1982 Reagan Peace Plan & 1988 Shultz Peace Plan) were rejected by the Israeli government without serious consequences for the "special relationship."

Throughout the Reagan years, the administration was unable to convince Israel's Likud-led and national unity governments to accept any of its proposed peace plans to implement the Palestinian autonomy clauses that had been agreed to at the Camp David Summit, or to make any other significant concessions involving the peace process. The rise of Yitzhak Shamir and Ariel Sharon in Israel made it even less likely that Israel would compromise on "Land for Peace," but had little effect on the "special relationship." The troubled peace process was compartmentalized from the issues of

strategic cooperation between the states. Not even the revelation that the Israelis had used a Jewish Naval Intelligence Officer, Jonathan Pollard, to spy on the United States in 1985 seemed to disturb the continued development and improvement of the relationship. On the contrary, the United States expanded its strategic relationship with Israel in the 1980s. The expanded relationship was codified with the signing of that aforementioned Memorandums of Understanding on Strategic Cooperation in 1981 and a Memorandum of Agreement regarding Joint Political, Security and Economic Cooperation in 1988.²⁷¹ The Reagan administration had begun the process of compartmentalization in which the peace process was put in one box and the political, military and economic alliance with Israel was put in another box, and where support and friendship for Israel would not depend on the peace process as it had in the 1970s.

The “Reagan Revolution” of 1980 marked the coming of age of the religious right in American politics. Ironically, the Jewish community disagrees with and often fears the role of the religious right and has remained deeply concerned about its intentions of issues that affect the separation of Church and State (i.e.....prayer in schools, school vouchers, abortion rights, and more recently, stem cell research, etc.) and literally the place of Jews in American society. But oddly, in a particularly strange example of politics creating “strange bedfellows,” the Christian right -- for theological reasons that are starkly different from the Jewish community’s reasons – has emerged as a strong

²⁷¹ Full text available of these memorandums is available at Feldman, Shai. The Future of U.S.-Israeli Strategic Cooperation. (Washington, D.C.: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1996): 65-67, 69-70

defender of Israeli government policies and a strong opponent of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. The alliance between American Jews and the Christian right over Israel remains controversial within the Jewish community – especially among the more socially progressive elements of the community.

As mentioned above, early in the administration, Reagan responded somewhat critically to aggressive Israeli actions. In June, 1981, the administration criticized the Israeli decision to bomb the Iraqi nuclear reactor at Osirak. In December, 1981, it criticized the Israeli annexation of the Golan Heights. It also fought a pitched battle with AIPAC that fall over the sale of AWACS spy planes to Saudi Arabia. Although the administration won the fight in Congress, it realized the increasing influence of AIPAC with Congress. Over time, it became much less interested in challenging AIPAC. AIPAC seemed to have lost the battle, and won the war.

In the context of a renewed Cold War, there were clear strategic reasons to strengthen the U.S.-Israel alliance. The loss of strongly pro-American regime of the Shah of Iran left Israel as the most reliable American ally in the region. The assassination of Sadat in October, 1981 created concerns about the stability of Egypt as well. Once Israel invaded Lebanon in June, 1982, Israel was seen as engaging in a proxy war with a pro-Soviet regime in Syria. Despite occasional public criticism, the U.S.-Israel strategic, military and intelligence cooperation continued to grow during this period including the aforementioned memorandum of understanding on strategic cooperation that was signed by Israel and the United States on November 30, 1981. This memorandum outlines a

high level of military cooperation in defense of mutual security interests.²⁷² While somewhat critical of some Israeli actions during the Lebanon War, the administration remained a strong ally and supporter including a deployment of U.S. Peacekeeping forces which ended in disaster shortly after a Hezbollah suicide truck bombing resulted in the deaths of 241 U.S. Marines in Lebanon on October 23, 1983. This horrific attack on the soldiers would become an early marker in defining what is now called the “War on Terror” and, combined with the Iranian hostage crisis, would help define public anger and fear towards Islam and public support for Israel as an adversary of terrorism.

The administration made several unsuccessful efforts to promote Middle East peace. Reagan proposed what became known as the Reagan Peace Plan in a speech on September 1, 1982. This plan attempted to pick up where Camp David had left off with a proposal to deal with the Palestinian issue by forming an association between Jordan, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. This was followed by several other efforts including the 1983 Fez Plan, the 1986 Peres Plan, and finally the 1998 Schultz Plan. The Schultz plan led to the first public U.S. dialogue with the PLO, which lasted from late, 1988 until mid-1990. All of these plans met stiff political resistance from hard line Israeli governments under first Menachem Begin and later Yitzhak Shamir. Shamir personally torpedoed Shimon Peres 1986 peace plan. While some of the governments were governments of National Unity, the Likud Party always had an effective veto over the various “Land for Peace” proposals.

²⁷² For text of Memorandum of Understanding see Feldman, Shai. The Future of U.S.- Israel Strategic Cooperation. (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1996): 65-67.

This period suggests the limitations of U.S. influence over Israel. Although the United States was a superpower, it also believed that it needed Israel as a strategic ally in the region in the context of the Cold War. Thus the Reagan administration for reasons of strategic value and domestic politics sought to pursue the peace process, but was unwilling or unable to use the major levers of diplomatic power to really compel a resistant Israeli government to give up the Occupied Territories. The growing culture of public hostility and fear of Islam in the early stages of the “War on Terror” also seems to have made it less likely that the Reagan administration felt compelled to pressure its Israeli ally to make concessions to PLO which was widely viewed as a terrorist organization. The so-called “Reagan Revolution” clearly enhanced the influence of the religious right on this issue within the administration. The increasing power of AIPAC -- which undoubtedly is a reflection of cultural change, as well as changes within the Jewish community, organizational acumen and the new campaign finance laws -- was also clearly a factor in strengthening alliance. The administration did little to address the issue of Israeli settlement growth in the Occupied Territories which had skyrocketed after Likud gained power in 1977. The peace process would remain in a separate compartment from the burgeoning U.S.-Israel alliance so that the “special relationship” was not weakened by Israeli intransigence on the peace process. The strategic alliance with Israel rather than providing the United States with the necessary leverage to advance the peace process – as it had in the 1970s – now acted to constrain the U.S. flexibility to promote a two-state solution.

Chapter 5 – The U.S.-Israel Alliance in the Post-Cold War Period

Two key events in the late 1980s that had the potential to reshape the U.S.-Israel alliance would ultimately demonstrate its continuity and strength. First, the First Palestinian *Intifada*, which began in December, 1987, began a process of humanizing the Palestinians and seeming to reverse the David-Goliath imagery as the conflict finally completed its transformation from the Arab-Israeli conflict into the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For the first time the image of the Palestinians began to change from that of the “terrorists” to that of young boys throwing stones at the Occupying Israeli soldiers. This had the potential to reduce the overwhelming support for Israel with the American public, but ultimately did not do so. Unlike Europe, where support for Israel has dropped significantly, the cultural and political ties between Israel and the United States were stronger as was the political influence of the Jewish community. The *Intifada* also led to Jordan’s King Hussein renouncing Jordanian claims to the West Bank, which essentially vitiated the various plans that had long been circulated calling for a “Jordanian option.”

Potentially, even more importantly, the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, the end of the Cold War, and ultimately the collapse of the Soviet Union itself in 1991, transformed the global political scene. The U.S. no longer needed Israel to help contain the Soviet influence in the Middle East. Thus the entire strategic basis of the U.S.-Israel relationship was suddenly thrown into question. Many analysts thought that the relationship would not survive the loss of its key strategic rationale. Ben-Zvi, for

example, noted a process “of erosion and decline in some components comprising this bilateral relationship.”²⁷³

George H.W. Bush and the Post-Cold War Transition. With the Cold War over and the need to contain the spread of communism ended, the George H.W. Bush administration was left with two primary goals which they vigorously pursued:

- 1) Maintaining access to the region’s oil reserves at a stable price; and
- 2) Mitigation/Stabilization of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

This position seemed further strengthened by the Gulf War. Israel had always been touted by AIPAC as America’s “unsinkable aircraft carrier” in case the United States had to fight a ground war in the Middle East. But when that contingency occurred and the United States needed to build a coalition of allies to support its “liberation” of Kuwait from Iraq, the United States needed Arab allies, like Syria and Saudi Arabia, more than it needed Israeli bases and ports. These states refused to join a coalition that included Israel. In fact, Israel became a strategic liability rather than asset, because the United States ended up having to send Patriot missile batteries to defend Israel against Iraqi scud missile attacks.

In this context, the administration of George H.W. Bush and his Secretary of State, James Baker, had much more strategic leverage to deal with the peace process. Shortly after the U.S.-led coalition expelled Iraq from Kuwait during the First Gulf War, they convened the Madrid Peace Conference (October 30 – November 2, 1991) in an

²⁷³ Ben-Zvi, Abraham. The United States and Israel: The Limits of the Special Relationship. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993): 209-210.

attempt to restart the regional peace process. The Shamir-led Israeli government grudgingly agreed to attend. The negotiating process that followed resulted in several rounds of fruitless peace talks in Washington between Israel and a joint delegation Palestinian-Jordanian delegation, that indirectly, but not officially, represented the PLO.

Bush and Baker having defended Israel against Iraq and no longer needing Israel as a Cold War asset, clearly opted to pursue policies akin to those used by earlier administrations to pressure Israel on the peace process. They broke down the compartmentalization and tied the progress in the peace process to the U.S.-Israel “special relationship.” The George H.W. Bush administration, unlike the Reagan administration, placed immense pressure on the Israelis around the issue of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories. Bush and Baker refused to authorize a \$10 billion in loan guarantees (over and above the \$3 billion in existing foreign aid) that Israel needed to finance a massive influx of post-Soviet immigrants, because of Israeli policies on settlement expansion in the Occupied Territories. In this case, Israel was able to resist the demands of its superpower patron despite all that the United States had done to protect Israel. Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir refused to change his policies and the issue remained unresolved. The Bush administration had decided that in a post-Cold War world the strategic importance of the peace process exceeded the strategic importance of the U.S.-Israel alliance.²⁷⁴ Despite the immense pressure brought to bear by the Bush

²⁷⁴ This period is bitterly chronicled in Moshe Arens memoir: Arens, Moshe. Broken Covenant: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis Between the U.S. and Israel. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995)

administration, Shamir stood his ground and refused to make concessions to Israel's superpower patron.

Ultimately, in 1992, the Israeli public rejected Shamir's hard-line policies. The standoff between Israel and the United States ended when Shamir's Likud Party was defeated by Yitzhak Rabin's Labor Party. Rabin quickly accepted the freeze on settlements sought by the Bush administration.

These events ultimately prove to be the exception that proves the rule. The Bush/Baker policy harkened back to a pre-Reagan approach to foreign policy of strategic realism, but this turned out to be passing phase not a full-scale post-Cold War redefinition of U.S.-Israel alliance. Here the U.S., which having just defeated Iraq in the Gulf War and defended Israel against Scud missiles, was in an exceptionally strong position to pressure Israel on the peace process. Thus they briefly broke down the politically and culturally imposed compartmentalization that prevented the preceding Reagan Administration and succeeding Clinton Administration from pressuring Israel. It is also not insignificant that Bush and Baker, being former Texas oilmen, were particularly sensitive to the need to maintain good relations with the Arab oil producers. Even so, they paid a heavy political price for pursuing a policy that reflected America's strategic interest in discouraging settlements and encouraging a comprehensive "Land for Peace" settlement.

Presidents Eisenhower, Carter, and George H.W. Bush are the three Presidents who have taken the hardest lines in putting pressure on the Israelis around issues of war and peace. Eisenhower earned 40% of the Jewish vote during his re-election campaign in

1956. When his Vice-President, Richard Nixon, ran to succeed him, Nixon received only 18% of the Jewish vote and lost a close election to John F. Kennedy. Carter received 64% of the Jewish vote in 1976. He received only 45% of the Jewish vote (in a 3-way race in which Independent candidate John Anderson took 15% of the Jewish vote) and lost his re-election bid to Ronald Reagan. George H.W. Bush received 35% of the Jewish vote in 1988. This dropped to 11% in his losing re-election campaign in 1992 (with Independent candidate Ross Perot taking 9% of the Jewish vote). In each of these cases, a President -- or his party -- who disagreed with Israeli policies and actively challenged them lost roughly 20% of the Jewish vote in the following election and his party was defeated. The lost Jewish votes do not provide the margin of defeat in any of these cases. In each of these cases, there are many other reasons that could be offered to explain the decline in the Jewish vote and the candidate's overall defeat. President Carter had both a weak economy and the embarrassing Iran hostage crisis to contend with. President George H.W. Bush was also dealing with a recession during his re-election campaign. Both Bush and Carter were hurt by the presence of an Independent candidate whose challenge had little or nothing to do with Middle East policy.²⁷⁵

Still the data suggests that in each case, the President suffered politically in the Jewish community when he put pressure on Israel. In the latter two cases, there were angry public responses from the Jewish community over the incumbent President's policies towards Israel. The angry Jewish reaction also affected factors such as fundraising, voter turn out, and volunteering from within the Jewish community.

²⁷⁵ Albert, David. "Presidents Lose When They 'Pressure Israel.'" Jewish

Although it is more difficult to track, these Presidents might have also been hurt with Christian supporters of Israel. Thus, it would be reasonable to conclude that the Jewish community's anger over each President's Israel policies was at least a factor in each of these elections, there is little evidence to suggest that it was necessarily the deciding factor in any of them. Conversely, Presidents who are seen by the Jewish community as having been extremely supportive of the Jewish community such as Truman in 1948, Nixon in 1972, Clinton in 1996, and George W. Bush in 2004 generally maintained or increased their support in the Jewish community. (See Appendix E for details of Jewish voting patterns.)

Clinton and the Oslo Peace Process. The Clinton administration was elected with nearly 80% of the Jewish vote on a strongly “pro-Israel” platform. President Clinton went as far as promising to move the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem during his campaign. They faced the same dilemma as many previous administrations: How could they be Israel's best friend and closest ally and still act as an even-handed mediator to advance a peace process towards a goal of a two-state solution which has been widely seen as an American strategic interest for decades?

Politically, the evolution of the Democratic Party shaped the Clinton administration's approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Democratic Party, while more concerned about Jewish votes and campaign donations, could until the 1980s take Jewish support somewhat for granted as a core constituency of their New Deal coalition until the 1980s. The vast majority of American Jews, particularly outside the Orthodox

Currents. (Vol. 59, No. 1, January-February, 2005): 6.

community, continued to support the Democratic Party out of a personal, sometimes familial, loyalty that is rooted in commitments to liberal economic and social policies of the New Deal and Great Society eras. As American Jews have moved up the socio-economic ladder and become more integrated into the broad American middle class, the Democratic Party has had to compete to hold on to their votes. In the 1970s and 1980s, Republican Presidential candidates were receiving upwards of 30% of the Jewish vote – a dramatic increase over the previous years. While the Jewish community and the Jewish vote has remained overwhelmingly Democratic, there was a growing sense that the Jewish vote was becoming a contested voting bloc.

As a result, the Democratic Party had to try harder to demonstrate the depth of its commitment to Israel just as the Republicans began to emphasize their commitment to Israel both to please their Christian right base and to compete for economically conservative middle class Jews. Thus political concerns replaced the strategic concerns (which had under girded the Kissingerian foreign policy and the President Carter's Camp David negotiations in the 1970s) as the primary motivators in the development of American foreign policy. With the end of the Cold War, strategic concerns seemed to fall into the background and American policy became increasing a political construct. The Clinton administration, as the first post-Cold War Democratic administration, naturally became the conduits of the Democratic political concerns over retaining the Jewish vote.

The first term of the Clinton Administration, which roughly coincided with the Labor-led Israeli coalition under the leadership of Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres governments, proved to be remarkably cooperative period in U.S.-Israeli relations since

the Israel and U.S. governments were in essential agreement over the need to pursue the Oslo Peace Process. The Rabin government was much more inclined to advance the peace process than the various Likud governments that had been in power for the last 15 years. For once, the perceived interests of the two partners rather than U.S. pressure resulted in a major step forward in the peace process. The convergence of national and political interests had revitalized a relationship that had undergone one of its most difficult periods during the previous administration of President George H.W. Bush.

The Oslo Peace initiative was actually started as an informal backchannel outside of the official Washington-based peace process and eventually led to the ground-breaking 1993 Declaration of Principles. Surprisingly, this agreement was reached with little or no direct American involvement. Nevertheless, Oslo negotiations created an opportunity for the famous signing ceremony on the White House lawn on September 13, 1993 and the iconic picture of Bill Clinton bringing Yitzhak Rabin and Yasir Arafat together to shake hands. This was a promising start for what would become an extremely rocky process between Israelis and Palestinians. The following year, with the “Jordanian option” off the table, the administration was able to broker a Peace Treaty between Israel and Jordan, which had only minor boundary disputes to resolve.

However, the compartmentalized American policy which had begun to emerge in the Reagan period would re-emerge in the Clinton administration in a manner that would make it difficult for the Clinton administration to reconcile its contradictory roles of Israel’s best friend and a neutral peace mediator. The Clinton administration was unable to leverage its strategic ties to Israel to use in the peace process, because its domestic

political commitments required it to separate its special relationship with Israel from its role as peace mediator. This process could only work as long as American and Israeli goals and strategic interests in the peace process were essentially synonymous. However, as the peace process evolved and the need for Israeli concessions grew, this became less and less the case. Thus the Clinton administration's inability to exercise an even-handed policy allowed the Israelis and Palestinians to engage in a cycle of violence that would undermine the credibility of the peace process.

While Israel had placed a ban on creating new settlements in the Occupied Territories, it continued to expand existing settlements to account for so-called "natural growth" eventually doubling the number of Israeli settlers in the West Bank to over 200,000. More settlements provoked Palestinian suicide bombings; suicide bombings led to a destructive polarization within Israeli society about whether the Oslo "Land for Peace" process offered a viable road to peace. Each side managed to attack the other's most vulnerable point of concern. Suicide bombings undermined Israel's sense of safety and security which remained vital in a society that lived in the shadow of the Holocaust (or *Shoah*/calamity in Hebrew). Settlements undermined the fear of a Palestinian society traumatized by the 1948 dispossession of their land (or *Nakba*/catastrophe in Arabic) that even more of their land was disappearing. Thus the cycle of violence began to eat away at the confidence of two traumatized peoples.

With both the Democratic and Republican Parties (which controlled Congress after the 1994 midterm elections) tied to "pro-Israel" constituencies within each party's base, the American government was unable to exert significant pressure on the Israeli

government to control settlement growth. As long as settlements were expanding, the relatively weak Palestinian government was unable to muster the will to challenge the violent factions within its society. Instead, as described earlier, the leaders of the political parties competed with each other to offer the most over-the-top commitments to supporting the U.S.-Israel alliance regardless of the decisions that Israel made on the peace process.

When Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Israel's most credible advocate of "Land for Peace," was tragically assassinated on November 4, 1995 by Yigal Amir, a fanatical right-wing Jewish Israeli opponent of the peace process, the peace process suffered a severe blow. While the peace process initially moved forward under the leadership of Shimon Peres, the Israeli belief in the peace process was ultimately shattered by a series of devastating bus bombings in late February and early March, 1996. This led to the electoral victory of Oslo opponent Benjamin Netanyahu in May, 1996. The election of the government of hard-line Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu changed the strategic dynamic since the Netanyahu government was far less enthusiastic about the Oslo process than its predecessor. The United States was able to pressure Israel into signing and implementing the Hebron Protocol in January, 1997, but then the progress came to an almost complete halt for nearly two years following Netanyahu's decision to build a new settlement at Har Homa in the Occupied Territories southeast of Jerusalem (February, 1997). Netanyahu also approved the opening of an archaeological tunnel near the Temple Mount which led to rioting (September, 1996). These provocations were designed to undermine the peace process. The Clinton administration was unwilling or

unable to seriously challenge these provocative actions by the Netanyahu government. With Israeli and American views of the peace process diverging dramatically, the Clinton administration had so compartmented the peace process and the “special relationship” and so publicly committed itself to unquestioned support for Israel’s policies, that it was unable to use its diplomatic muscle to advance its interest in towards achieving the agreed-upon goal of a two-state solution.

In mid-1998, Secretary of State Madeline Albright tried and failed to convince the Prime Minister Netanyahu to accept a 13% Israeli redeployment from the West Bank. Pressure from Israel’s supporters in the United States forced her to back down. In the end, Secretary Albright is reported to have relayed the following capitulation to the leaders of the pro-Israel lobby: “If in the end Israel cannot accept our ideas, we will respect that decision. And it will not affect our fundamental commitment to Israel by a single jot or tittle.”²⁷⁶ The compartmentalization that had emerged during the Reagan administration had fully returned. The peace process and the U.S.-Israel friendship were, once again, placed in entirely separate boxes. As Vice-President Al Gore told the AIPAC conference that year, and has been quoted above: “Our special relationship with Israel is *unshakable, it is ironclad, eternal and absolute*. It does not depend on the peace process, it transcends the peace process.” Events would show the political truth behind Gore’s over-the-top rhetoric.

²⁷⁶ Gellman, Barton. “U.S. Tones Down Stance on Israel.” Washington Post (Final Edition), May 19, 1998, p. A16.

Several months later, the relatively modest Israeli concessions achieved in the Wye River Memorandum (October 23, 1998) were only achieved at the price of an enormous expenditure of Presidential time and effort. Even so, the final day of the conference witnessed the almost surreal experience of Prime Minister Netanyahu almost scuttling the entire deal in effort to convince President Clinton to release aforementioned American-Jewish spy, Jonathan Pollard -- who is still serving a life sentence and has been deemed a continuing threat to American national security by American Intelligence officials -- to Israel. Although President Clinton rejected the option of immediately releasing Pollard -- after CIA Director George Tenet apparently threatened to resign --²⁷⁷ some observers believed, incorrectly as it turned out, that President Clinton's review of the matter would eventually result in Pollard's early release. Regardless, the fact that a bilateral issue between the U.S. and Israel became an issue during a negotiation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority speaks volumes about the complexity and contradictions within America's "special relationship" with Israel. While the PLO did abrogate the controversial clauses in their Charter during President Clinton's December, 1998, visit to Gaza, most of the implementation bogged down in mutual recriminations. In the end, the Israelis only partially implemented their agreed-upon withdrawal from 13% of the West Bank. This increased the mutual animosity between the parties and the set the stage for the mutual acrimony and distrust that would play out in the final stage of the Clinton administration's efforts.

²⁷⁷ Risen, James & Steven Erlanger. "C.I.A. Chief Vowed To Quit If Clinton Freed Israeli Spy." New York Times, November 11, 1998. Page A1.

President Clinton's last chance to bring the parties together came after Netanyahu was defeated by Labor Party leader and former General Ehud Barak in mid-1999. Clinton, in effort to repeat the success of President Carter two decades earlier, put his personal prestige on the line and brought Ehud Barak and Yasser Arafat to Camp David for a summit meeting (July 11-25, 2000) in an attempt to break the deadlock on final status issues. Many conflicting accounts have been written about the Camp David II summit by the various partisans making it particularly difficult to untangle the web of confusion surrounding this seminal event. Clearly, under pressure from President Clinton, the Israelis made some sort of an indirect offer on final status issues that was significantly better than any previous Israeli proposal. Arafat ultimately rejected the Israeli offer -- such as it was. Much else remains contested, but the tensions described above within the American-Israel relationship seemed to play out to the detriment of the possibility of a peaceful resolution. Some of the complex problems that emerged at the Camp David summit are described in this account by Robert Malley and Hussein Agha:

The United States had several different roles in the negotiations, complex and often contradictory: as principal broker of the putative peace deal; as guardian of the peace process; as Israel's strategic ally; and as its cultural and political partner. The ideas it put forward throughout the process bore the imprint of each.

As the broker of the agreement, the President was expected to present a final deal that Arafat could not refuse. Indeed, that notion was the premise of Barak's attraction to a summit. But the United States' ability to play the part was hamstrung by two of its other roles. First, America's political and cultural affinity with Israel translated into an acute sensitivity to Israeli domestic concerns and an exaggerated appreciation of Israel's substantive moves. American officials initially were taken aback when Barak indicated he could accept a division of the Old City or Palestinian sovereignty over many of Jerusalem's Arab neighborhoods—a reaction that reflected less an assessment of what a “fair solution” ought to be than

a sense of what the Israeli public could stomach. The US team often pondered whether Barak could sell a given proposal to his people, including some he himself had made. The question rarely, if ever, was asked about Arafat.

A second constraint on the US derived from its strategic relationship with Israel. One consequence of this was the “no-surprise rule,” an American commitment, if not to clear, at least to share in advance, each of its ideas with Israel. Because Barak’s strategy precluded early exposure of his bottom lines to anyone (the President included), he would invoke the “no-surprise rule” to argue against US substantive proposals he felt went too far. The US ended up (often unwittingly) presenting Israeli negotiating positions and couching them as rock-bottom red lines beyond which Israel could not go. Faced with Arafat’s rejection, Clinton would obtain Barak’s acquiescence in a somewhat improved proposal, and present it to the Palestinians as, once again, the best any Israeli could be expected to do. With the US playing an endgame strategy (“this is it!”) in what was in fact the middle of the game (“well, perhaps not”), the result was to depreciate the assets Barak most counted on for the *real* finale: the Palestinians’ confidence in Clinton, US credibility, and America’s ability to exercise effective pressure. Nor was the US tendency to justify its ideas by referring to Israeli domestic concerns the most effective way to persuade the Palestinians to make concessions. In short, the “no-surprise rule” held a few surprises of its own. In a curious, boomerang-like effect, it helped convince the Palestinians that any US idea, no matter how forthcoming, was an Israeli one, and therefore both immediately suspect and eminently negotiable.

Seven years of fostering the peace process, often against difficult odds, further eroded the United States’ effectiveness at this critical stage. The deeper Washington’s investment in the process, the greater the stake in its success, and the quicker the tendency to indulge either side’s whims and destructive behavior for the sake of salvaging it. US threats and deadlines too often were ignored as Israelis and Palestinians appeared confident that the Americans were too busy running after the parties to think seriously of walking away.²⁷⁸

Agha and Malley make it clear that the inherent contradictions in the various roles that the United States had taken made it impossible for it to act effectively to promote a

²⁷⁸ Agha, Hussein and Robert Malley. “Camp David: The Tragedy of Errors.” (The New York Review of Books, Volume 48, Number 13, August 13, 2001). Both writers were present at Camp David. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/14380>

genuine peace deal. In some sense, Barak was so intent on getting the best deal possible so that he could sell it to a fractured political coalition and a skeptical Israeli public that he was unable to strike a deal that was in Israel's best interest. President Clinton and his advisors were so close to Israel that they were unable to press Israel to make a deal which would have been in the best interest of both the U.S. and Israel. Arafat, whose political situation at home was also precarious, was also unable to make significant compromises - something that the Clinton negotiators had a difficult time recognizing. The political situation was made even more difficult for President Clinton, because of the political pressures of the last year of his administration in which his Vice-President was in a close race for President and his First Lady was coincidentally running for Senate in New York -- the state where this issue holds a particularly unique political status.

Following the widespread outbreak violence of the Second *Intifada* (September, 2000) and the extended U.S. electoral recount (November, December, 2000), President Clinton made a last ditch effort to bridge the gaps with a set of bridging proposals which brought the parties as close to settlement as they had ever been. Clinton offered these proposals only after the U.S. election was complete and the American political consequences of offering far reaching proposals and expecting major Israeli concessions had evaporated. Of course, these proposals were too little too late with Clinton leaving office on January 20, 2001, and Ehud Barak headed for political defeat a few days later. Nevertheless, his final effort became the basis of the Taba Summit (January 21-27, 2001),

which provides a starting point for future negotiations.²⁷⁹ At this point, the U.S.-Israel alliance, while still justified and rationalized in a strategic framework had evolved into a cultural and political alliance. Without the Cold War strategic framework, the “special relationship” did not function in a way that was healthy enough to create opportunities to advance the Middle East peace process.

George W. Bush and 9/11. The near simultaneous inauguration of the George W. Bush on January 20, 2001 and the election victory of Likud leader Ariel Sharon a few days later in Israel sealed the fate of peace talks and seemed to close the door on serious discussion of a comprehensive peace settlement. The current stage of the U.S.-Israel Alliance is in large part the result of the alliance of George W. Bush and Ariel Sharon. These two men came to power on the world stage at the same moment in very different countries for very different reasons, but never-the-less established a bond of friendship – both personal and national -- that is connected by a shared set of values. It may be an accident of history, but an almost predictable one, that the neo-conservative ideology of Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney, and the foreign policy hawks that surrounded them bore a remarkable similarity to neo-revisionism of Ariel Sharon’s Likud Party. Ilan Peleg and Paul Schamm write that:

Israeli Neo-Revisionism and American Neoconservatism....have developed remarkably similar ideologies and policies, based on similar and related *Weltanshaungen*. In both cases, these movements combined

²⁷⁹ The prototype Geneva Accords, announced on December 1, 2003, was an extrapolation of the agreements begun at Taba. See Yossi Beilin, The Path to Geneva The Quest for a Permanent Agreement, 1996-2004. (New York: RDV Books, 2004) for details of the Geneva agreements.

assertive nationalism, unrestrained unilateralism, and unabashed militarism in response to what they viewed as external challenges to their societies...²⁸⁰

In short, the two ranchers were natural allies. Both new leaders sought to distance themselves from what they perceived as the failed diplomatic policies of their immediate predecessors. During the first nine months of the Bush/Cheney administration, President Bush adopted the position of ignoring the peace process and turning their attention to other areas including Iraq and missile defense. According to Former Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill, at the first National Security Council on January 30, 2001, Bush stated:

We're going to correct the imbalances of the previous administration on the Mideast conflict. We're going to tilt it back toward Israel. And we're going to be consistent. Clinton overreached, and it all fell apart. That's why we're in trouble.... If the two sides don't want peace, there's no way we can force them....I don't see much we can do over there at this point. I think it's time to pull out of that situation.....Sometimes a show a strength by one side can really clarify things.²⁸¹

Bush clearly believed that President Clinton had gotten too engaged in the negotiations and had been too “pro-Palestinian” in pressing for a negotiated solution. Ariel Sharon who refused to re-open negotiations amidst suicide bombing attacks began instead to construct a West Bank security barrier (variously called a “fence” and a “wall” by proponents and opponents, respectively) to both protect and essentially begin a process of

²⁸⁰ Peleg, Ilan and Paul Schamm. “Israeli Neo-Revisionism and American Neoconservatism: The Unexplored Parallels.” Middle East Journal. (Volume 61, No. 1, Winter, 2007): 76.

²⁸¹ Ron Suskind. The Price of Loyalty: George W. Bush, the White House, and the Education of Paul O'Neill. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004): 72-73. The last comment is answer to Secretary of State Colin Powell's concern about the dire consequences of a U.S. pullback and clearly refers to a “show of strength” by Israel.

de facto annexation of many of the settlements. The Bush administration, by-and-large, has continued to support Israel's policy in this regard.

The alliance was further strengthened by the September 11th attacks which reestablished a common enemy -- Islamic extremism -- that had been missing since the end of the Cold War. The September 11th attacks would ultimately serve to reinforce the cultural glue that tied together the strategic framework of the U.S.-Israel alliance. The "War on Terror" suddenly emerged as America's primary priority in the Middle East which clearly overshadowed any interest in advancing the peace process. Israel, which had long struggled with terrorism, emerged as an even more natural ally. The neo-conservative ideology of the administration emphasized the importance of military means over the use of diplomacy. Jason Vest argues that the neo-conservatives "effectively hold there is no difference between U.S. and Israeli national security interests, and that the only way to assure continued safety and prosperity for both countries is through hegemony in the Middle East."²⁸² Finally, President Bush's born-again religious devotion and personal connection to the religious right and its way of conceptualizing Israel reinforced the tight bond with Israel as a natural extension of Western Judeo-Christian civilization engaged in a titanic struggle with Islamic extremism.

In the cultural context created within the United States after September 11th, Israel was defined as a valuable ally within the Manichean "Clash of Civilizations." Islam,

²⁸² Vest, Jason. "The Men from JINSA and CSP." The Nation. (September 2, 2002)

which has long been viewed with hostility and suspicion by many Americans, morphed into a threat to Western civilization. The “terrorist” enemies of both Israel and the United States have been publicly defined as a powerful amorphous group motivated by irrational hatred of the United States and Israel. The underlying assumption is that the U.S. and Israel are entirely benevolent and that the terrorists have no rational reason for their hatred so they must be acting out of an irrational, religiously-inspired hatred that is completely detached from American and Israeli actions and the behavior. Their hatred of the United States and of Israel is defined not as the result of any action or activity of either country, but as the result the extremist’s religious fanaticism. Shortly after the September 11th attacks, President George W. Bush framed the issue in the following terms in his September 20th address to Congress:

Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated. (Applause.)

Americans are asking, why do they hate us? They hate what we see right here in this chamber -- a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms -- our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other.

They want to overthrow existing governments in many Muslim countries, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan. They want to drive Israel out of the Middle East. They want to drive Christians and Jews out of vast regions of Asia and Africa.

These terrorists kill not merely to end lives, but to disrupt and end a way of life. With every atrocity, they hope that America grows fearful, retreating from the world and forsaking our friends. They stand against us, because we stand in their way.

We are not deceived by their pretenses to piety. We have seen their kind before. They are the heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the 20th century. By sacrificing human life to serve their radical visions -- by abandoning every value except the will to power -- they follow in the path of fascism, and Nazism, and totalitarianism. And they will follow

that path all the way, to where it ends: in history's unmarked grave of discarded lies.
(Applause.)²⁸³

From the beginning,²⁸⁴ the defense of Israel is defined as an integral part of the “War on Terror.” Islamic extremism is connected to the struggle against the Nazis, who pursued an irrational policy of exterminating European Jewry. The entire discourse is defined in terms of a threat to our “way of life.”

As noted above, while the Democrats had long had a close political/cultural connection to the Jewish community, the Republicans had now, as discussed earlier, developed a deep connection to the religious right, which was if anything more unquestioningly “pro-Israel” in its willingness to support Israeli policies than the Jewish community.²⁸⁵ The Republican Party’s foreign policy goals in the Middle East, particularly under the sway of Henry Kissinger in the 1970s and President George H.W. Bush, had been fairly strategic since the Republicans did not rely on Jewish votes as part of their coalition. With the rise of the “religious right” many Republicans committed to strongly “pro-Israel” positions on theological grounds. The Republican Party adopted

²⁸³ President George W. Bush’s address to Congress, September 20, 2001. The applause references are in the original text.
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>

²⁸⁴ Secretary of State Colin Powell did deliver a speech in Louisville on November 19, 2001, that called for active U.S. engagement in the peace process and endorsed the then-current Mitchell report. This dissenting view within the administration was by-and-large ignored by the neo-conservatives.

²⁸⁵ While the support of most Jews for Israel has a religious component, it could broadly be defined more as ethnic and cultural connection for most American Jews outside of the Orthodox community. For the Christian right, the connection was basically understood in terms of a fundamentalist religious commitment to God’s “chosen people” returning to the “Holy Land” and foreshadowing the Second Coming of Jesus.

rhetoric and policies which are much more sympathetic to the State of Israel than they had in the past. These changes, which began under the Reagan Administration, solidified in the ideas and rhetoric of the party during the 1990s. The statements of Republican leaders like Former Speaker Gingrich and Majority Leader Lott that were cited above show how the party had evolved. As described in the next chapter, it is also clear in the Republican Party platforms; Every Republican platform since 1980 has spoken of a “moral” element to the U.S.-Israel relationship. (See Appendix F) In general, other foreign policy relationships are not spoken of as moral commitments, but purely as strategic alliances that are in America’s best interest.

The rise of the neo-conservatives in the 1990s stemmed in large part from the conceptualization of the Post-Cold War world put forward by Samuel Huntington as a “Clash of Civilizations.” The Neo-Conservatives developed a foreign policy, that while based on an interpretation of America’s strategic interests, also worked closely in tandem with the views of the Christian right. Both the neo-conservatives and the religious right maintained a deep ideological connection in support of Israel as a special ally. They both see Israel as bastion of Western civilization in the Middle East which could help to protect the United States from the “threat of Islam.” This once theoretical threat became far more real with the September 11th attacks. For the Bush administration, the “War on Terror” replaced the “Cold War” as the defining conflict of the age.

The Iraq War also strengthened the ties, since the U.S. invasion of Iraq was clearly beneficial to Israel’s military position. Also, both countries were now put in very similar positions as occupiers of a hostile Arab populations leading to increased tactical

cooperation. This phase has witnessed extreme version of the compartmentalization. The Bush administration has completely separated the U.S.-Israel alliance from its efforts to achieve piece via its Road Map Peace Plan -- issued on June 24, 2002. So much so that many critics have come to question the seriousness of the administration's commitment to its own peace plan.

The policies of the Bush administration in terms of their unquestioned support of the Israeli Occupation policies, their intermittent and lackadaisical engagement in the Middle East process, their support for Israel's 2005 unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, their support for Israel's disastrous 2006 War against Hezbollah in Lebanon, and, of course, the invasion and Occupation of Iraq follow naturally from their view of a "Clash of Civilizations." Their ideological approach often rejected diplomacy, because it reflected a form of weakness that required compromise with the "axis of evil" and other enemies. This approach leaves little political space for negotiation, diplomacy, and political compromise. Just as most of the regional conflicts of the Cold War were viewed through the prism of containing Communism, the George W. Bush administration has adopted "The War on Terror" as a Manichean paradigm for viewing modern conflicts including most particularly the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

While it is hard to understand the origin of this sort of international alliance, one wonders if the relative international inexperience in world affairs of Presidents Clinton and George W. Bush led him to be excessively influenced by their own cultural and religious predispositions in Israel's favor. Their inexperience seemed lead them to rely

on advisors -- such as Dennis Ross and Elliot Abrams, respectively -- who reinforced their instinctual proclivities to favor policies supportive of Israel. Their inexperience in foreign affairs may have also led them to look up to older grandfatherly Israeli leaders -- Rabin for Clinton, Sharon for Bush -- who also reinforced their own existing predilections. By contrast, the other President in the Post-Cold War period, George H.W. Bush, had a much deeper breadth of understanding of world affairs when he entered office and approached the conflict thru an entirely different framework.

Historical Comparisons. While there is no way to draw exact comparisons of similar issue situations from different periods of the U.S.-Israel relationship, but some contrasts can be drawn between how earlier administrations dealt certain issue situations as compared with the two most recent administrations. The comparisons are inherently inexact, since historical circumstances do not allow for exact comparisons.

Settlement Expansion and Refugees: During the Reagan and, especially during the George H.W. Bush, administrations, there was a clear understanding that Israeli settlement expansion in the Occupied Territories undermined the peace process and undermined the viability of a future Palestinian state. President Bush and Secretary Baker took dramatic steps in 1991-92 to condition Israeli Loan guarantees for assistance to Russian immigrants on a freeze of settlement expansion in the Occupied Territories. While their efforts were not successful, they used a clear economic incentive to back up their efforts to stop settlement expansion. They were willing to accept the domestic political consequences of doing so. There was a clear separation of Israeli and American

strategic interests in this calculation and an understanding that advancing the peace process was in the strategic interest of the United States.

By contrast, the Clinton administration did little to enforce the intent of the settlement freeze included in the Oslo Accord which prohibited unilateral actions to change the situation in the territories. Israel stopped building more settlements, but it doubled the number of settlers during the Clinton/Oslo period. The administration did little to challenge the Israeli decision to build a new settlement at Har Homa southeast of Jerusalem in 1997 despite widespread international objections. The George W. Bush administration went even further on the issue of settlements. While Bush's 2002 Road Map extracted a promise to remove illegal outposts built after March, 2001 as part of its first phase, the administration has made little effort to hold Israel to this promise. In an April 14, 2004 letter from President Bush to Ariel Sharon read:

In light of new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli populations centers, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949, and all previous efforts to negotiate a two-state solution have reached the same conclusion. It is realistic to expect that any final status agreement will only be achieved on the basis of mutually agreed changes that reflect these realities.²⁸⁶

This letter suggests the implicit acceptance of major Israeli settlement blocs on the West Bank before any negotiations had even started. This was a startling break from previous U.S. policies that the future of these settlement blocs was to be negotiated as part of a

²⁸⁶ Exchange of letters between PM Sharon and President Bush, April, 14, 2004 <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace+Process/Reference+Documents/Exchange+of+letters+Sharon-Bush+14-Apr-2004.htm>

final status agreement. In the same letter, the Bush administration also agreed that “a solution to the Palestinian refugee issue as part of any final status agreement will need to be found through the establishment of a Palestinian state, and the settling of Palestinian refugees there, rather than in Israel.”²⁸⁷ No previous administration had made this sort of commitment to Israel on the refugee issue. In so doing, they placed themselves firmly on the Israeli side in one of the two of the key issues to be negotiated in future peace talks. While there is little doubt that Israel would have given little ground on either of these issues in final status talks, by siding with Israel ahead of any future negotiations the U.S. strengthened the Israeli position and weakened the Palestinian position. They also further compromised the ability of the United States to act as a neutral mediator in future negotiations. By supporting Israel in the context of the “War on Terror” this position continued the compartmentalization that assumed that the U.S. and Israel interests were synonymous and that U.S. interest in a strong Israel superseded U.S. strategic interest in advancing the peace process.

Withdrawals from Occupied Land: Earlier administrations clearly insisted that Israel withdraw from lands that had been occupied. Eisenhower insisted that Israel withdraw from the Sinai Peninsula in 1957. Kissinger insisted on an Israeli pullback from Quinatra as part of the 1974 Syrian disengagement agreement. President Carter pressed Israel to fully withdraw from the entire Sinai Peninsula as part of the 1978 Camp David negotiations. All of these administrations were able to use the diplomatic leverage

²⁸⁷ Ibid

of the United States to pressure Israel. The Clinton administration appeared so committed to Israel politically and personally that they were unable to get the Netanyahu to implement a previously agreed-to 1998 pullback from 13% of the West Bank. As noted, in quotes from Madeline Albright and Al Gore, they remained committed to maintaining an unbreakable U.S.-Israel alliance regardless of the consequences for the peace process. Thus they were unable to use American leverage to press Israel for concessions or even acknowledge that such concessions might be in Israel as well as America's strategic interest.

Unilateralism and Negotiations: Similarly, all previous administrations had insisted that Israel's conflicts with its neighbors could only be solved through bilateral and/or multi-lateral negotiations. In the same letter from 2004 described above, the Bush administration committed to full support for Israel's unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. This policy was in-line with the Bush administrations own unilateral instincts that it had followed in its decision to invade Iraq without an authorizing resolution from the United Nations. Again, this demonstrated a preference for deferring to Israel's assessment of its strategic interests and accepting Israel's approach rather than insisting on a more sustainable peace process that was likely to produce long-term stability in the region. In essence, in deferring to Israel's strategic judgment, the Bush administration gave up on over thirty years of American policy that asserted that a negotiated solution was in the U.S. interest and again accepted the framework of neo-conservatives that U.S. and Israeli strategic goals were synonymous and inseparable.

Similarly, every U.S. administration from Nixon to Clinton had encouraged negotiations between Israel and the neighboring Arab states. Under Nixon and Ford, Kissinger pressed Israel to negotiate Post-Yom Kippur War disengagement agreements with both Egypt and Syria and even pursued a policy of reassessing U.S.-Israeli relations in 1975 in order to press Israel forward. Carter personally hosted the Israelis and the Egyptians at the Camp David Summit in 1978 in order to seal those negotiations. Although somewhat less enthusiastic about the peace process during a period of renewed Cold War, the Reagan administration pursued several Israeli-Palestinian peace plans. The George H.W. Bush administration strongly encouraged all sides to convene the Madrid conference in 1991. They were even willing to publicly challenge the Israeli commitment to the peace process. Secretary of State Baker publicly criticized Israeli commitment to the peace process at a Congressional hearing when he argued that the Israelis weren't serious about peace and sarcastically told the Shamir government: "Everybody over there should know that the telephone number ((of the White House)) is 1-202-456-1414. When you're serious about peace, call us."²⁸⁸ The Clinton administration helped to promote an Israeli-Jordanian peace agreement, shepherded the Oslo peace process, hosted the Wye and Camp David II summits, and encouraged Israel to negotiate, albeit unsuccessfully with Syria. By contrast, the George W. Bush administration adopted a policy of refusing to negotiate or promote negotiations with those that it deemed "terrorists." The administration refused to talk with PLO

²⁸⁸ Church, George. "Middle East Call Us – We Won't Call." Time. June 25, 1990. Quoting Secretary of State James Baker.

Chairman/PA President Yasser Arafat and roundly condemned the Clinton administration for doing so. Both before and after Arafat's death, it did little to revive Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. Some news reports even suggest that the U.S. opposed Israeli-Syrian negotiations over the Golan Heights. The calculation seems to be that Israel is in a stronger strategic position when it acts unilaterally rather than when it engages in diplomacy and, consequentially, has to make concessions. The underlying neo-conservative premise seems to be a preference for unilateralism and military solutions over diplomacy.

Summit Conferences: Perhaps the most straight-forward comparison is to contrast the results achieved by President Carter at the first Camp David Summit (1978) and President George H.W. Bush to the Madrid Conference (1991) to those of President Clinton at the Wye Summit (1998) and the second Camp David Summit (2000). President Carter was willing and able to use American diplomatic muscle to make a reluctant Begin agree to return the entire Sinai Peninsula. While there was significant political resistance raised by the Jewish community, it was unable to prevent Carter from pressuring the Israelis. He was committed to making the peace process work and willing to use American diplomatic and financial levers to do so. Similarly Bush and Baker were willing to press a reluctant Shamir to attend the Madrid Conference and begin a process of negotiations. As a result, Carter was able to bring about Israel's first full peace agreement with its largest Arab adversary and Bush and Baker successfully laid the

<http://www.time.com/time/printout/0,8816,970468,00.html> Double parentheses in the original quote.

groundwork for the eventual Oslo agreement and the Jordan peace treaty a few years later. These administrations understood that Israel's interpretation of its own interests might differ from U.S. interpretation and were politically willing to pay the domestic price of pressuring the Israeli government. They probably also viewed their actions as being in Israel's own long-run best interest although this seems to have been more of a secondary concern. Israel was understood as a client state that, while independent, was greatly desirous of American diplomatic, economic, and military support.

Conversely, President Clinton was much more limited in his ability to pressure Prime Ministers Netanyahu and Barak at the Wye and 2nd Camp David summits. At Wye, he was only able to exact minimal concessions from Netanyahu and only after the Prime Minister attempted to force him to release convicted spy Jonathan Pollard. Clinton also had to agree to go to Gaza to oversee changes to the PLO Charter. In the end, many parts of the agreement weren't actually implemented. Prime Minister Barak later opted to refuse to implement the partial withdrawal agreement and other steps such as prisoner releases included in the 1998 Wye Accord ahead of the Camp David summit. While Barak's actions were intended to get the best deal that he could for Israel, they ended up doing just the opposite. By disregarding previously signed agreements, Barak undermined the Palestinian faith in the value of negotiating with Israel since such agreements could simply be ignored by the next prime minister. The Clinton administration was either unwilling or unable to press for Israel for compliance with Wye. Their alliance with Israel was too important to the Clinton administration to try to force acquiescence -- especially as they approached a Presidential election and as the

President struggled to recover politically from a failed effort to remove him from office. At Camp David, as Malley and Agha have noted above, the Clinton team was so close to the Israeli team that they were unable to really separate out their different roles or maintain real credibility with the Palestinian side as a balanced mediator. Their closeness and empathy with the Israelis resulted in a dysfunctional negotiating process.

The George W. Bush administration went several steps further in undermining the negotiating process. From 2001-2004, it refused to speak to the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, who it defined as a “terrorist.” After Arafat’s death, it did little to support the new Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, and instead continued to support Ariel Sharon’s unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. After Hamas won majority control in the Palestinian parliamentary election in January, 2006, it boycotted all contact with Hamas. Whereas the Clinton administration was willing to promote negotiations with the Palestinians, the Bush administration adopted an ideological approach that accepted Sharon’s assertion that there was no Palestinian negotiating partner. Thus, not surprisingly, there have been no American-hosted summit meetings up to this time during the Bush administration. Their approach has been to provide unquestioned support of Israel’s policies and thus refuse to assert that Israel’s frame of reference is in any way distinct from America’s own.

Unlike the 1970s and before, in the last two administrations the U.S. has been either unwilling or unable to use its position as Israel’s superpower patron to pressure Israel to make concessions in the peace process. This is the primary distinction between

the first five phases and the last two phases of the alliance. Since the early 1980s, a pattern has developed in which American administrations grow angry and warn Israel and then end up backing off without any serious sanctions or forcing Israel to alter its peace policies in any significant way. While the U.S. clearly still has the military and economic ability to force Israel to make concessions as it had done in the previous decades, it now seems to lack the political will to do so. Despite the overwhelming potential leverage of its position as a superpower protector, the United States often seems unwilling or unable to force Israel to alter its policies regarding significant American strategic priorities. Despite its position of relative weakness compared to the United States, Israel consistently follows its own perceived national interests even when they directly contradict with those of its superpower patron. Despite Israeli intransigence on these crucial issues, American administrations rarely exercise their vast power and influence at their disposal to force Israel to comply. Unlike 1957 or the late 1970s, or the even early 1990s, when the United States flexed some of its muscles, the U.S. is either unwilling or unable to compel Israel to conform. A partnership that had begun as a fairly ordinary patron-client relationship has now evolved into a much more complex, convoluted, and nuanced alliance in which the client is now, more often than not, able to refuse its patron.

If the relationship is viewed as that of a parent and a child, one could look at the United States as the devoted parent that can not provide “tough love” to discipline an unruly child to act in its own self-interest. Israel, instead of growing into a more responsible world citizen, acts like an obstinate child and pursues policies that are self-

destructive and destructive to others. This is the tragedy of the increasingly dysfunctional U.S.-Israel “special relationship.”

Chapter 6 – The Reframing of Israel in Democratic and Republican Platforms

The aforementioned rise of the religious right around 1980 was part of a realignment of the contours of the American party system. A newly assertive religiously conservative right-wing of Republican Party emerged as the base of the Party as the Democratic “New Deal” coalition frayed at the seams. One of the unanticipated and mostly unexpected results of this transformation was the strengthening of the U.S.-Israel “special relationship,” as the realignment resulted in the creation of strong “pro-Israel” political base within each party. Thus the two major political parties are one of the most important intermediary political institutions that serve to help establish and a broad bipartisan “pro-Israel” political consensus within the American political elite.

In this context it is extremely useful to examine the quadrennial platforms of both parties over time to understand how the political consensus within each party has evolved. Since platforms are only written every four years, they provide a useful periodic window into the nature of the political discourse. They tend to reflect the consensus views within the party (and the campaign of each party’s Presidential nominee). They are obviously greatly affected by whatever the most current issues are, but they also reflect the consensus within the party. (See Appendix F for extensive excerpts of all the platforms.)

The party platforms allow us to examine the gradual pattern of cultural change at clearly specified intervals as they occurred within both major American political parties. By examining the change that is occurring in the political parties we can see how the

political frame of reference for understanding the conflict is changing within the political establishment. Over time, we see how the nature of America's political commitment to Israel changes and the nature of the American evolving understanding of Israel's role in the Middle East changes. The rhetorical evolution of America's commitment to Israel serves to demonstrate the role that political parties play as one of the key political institutions that collects and transmits the views of both interest groups and the general public to the policymaking elites. At the same time, we are able to see the differences between the two parties. While both parties have developed often similar policies that are supportive of Israel, they have fundamentally different cultural assumptions that shape their views of the nature of that commitment. This is apparent in the rhetoric that they adopt when trying to define that commitment.

In the 1920s, the Jewish vote was already shifting towards the Democratic Party. Al Smith won 72% of the Jewish vote in 1928. With the advent of the Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal coalition of African-Americans, Jews, Unions, etc. the Jewish vote became a solidly Democratic vote with Roosevelt winning consistently between 82% and 90% of the Jewish vote. At the time of the development of the New Deal coalition, Israel/ Zionism were a non-issue in American politics. A Jewish state in the Middle East was a naïve dream supported by a minority of American Jews. While it had been supported publicly by American Jewish leaders like Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, it was not a major political issue. As the Second World War progressed and reports of the Holocaust began to filter out of Europe, Zionism began to emerge as more of an issue. Both Roosevelt and Wendell Willkie included referenced to a "free and

democratic commonwealth” and called for “unrestricted” Jewish immigration in their party’s respective 1944 platforms. This was language reflective of the 1942 Biltmore Conference and it marked the emergence of the Zionism as a serious political issue on the American political scene. The Democratic platform contained a single sentence on the subject, while the Republican platform was a little more extensive referencing both the 1917 Balfour Declaration and a 1922 Republican Congressional resolution, but they were practically the same in content.

By 1948, as the Israeli War of independence continued, both parties praised President Truman’s recognition of Israel and supported economic assistance to the fledgling Jewish State. While the Democratic platform was more extensive, there was little difference in content. The Democratic platform notes that the Jews “have long sought and justly deserve freedom and independence.” President Truman’s platform did make a promise to seek “revision of the arms embargo to accord to the State of Israel the right of self-defense.” However, this promise was never implemented by the Truman administration. The 1948 Democratic platform is also the first one by either party to affirm the “internationalization of Jerusalem” in accord with the UN’s 1947 partition plan.

By 1952 both parties had introduced passing references to seeking a peace settlement in the region. This has remained an on-going theme appearing in every platform since – sometimes in passing reference, sometimes in copious detail. During the 1950s, the platform planks remained focused on issues of postwar humanitarian relief for both Jewish and Arab refugees. It is worth noting that the party platforms would not

begin to refer to the Arab population as “Palestinians” until 1980. Both 1952 platforms referred to Israel’s “humanitarian” mission to help persecuted Jewish refugees. The Democratic platform referred to the “relief and reintegration of the Palestine refugees” while the Republican platform seems to suggest the same thing implicitly in a reference to bringing about “economic and social stability” to the region. The Republican language takes on a laudatory tone not previously present referring to Israel as a “constructive and inspiring undertaking.”

By the time of the 1956 platforms, the political context seems to have shifted from the postwar humanitarian relief to the Cold War. While references to refugee relief remain in both platforms, new language alluding to the Soviet threat and the regional arms race is now part of the picture and would continue to reoccur throughout the remaining decades of the Cold War. In 1956, both parties for the first time referred to guaranteeing Israel’s security. These platforms were written in the context of Soviet arms supplies going to Egypt during the lead up to the Suez crisis. The Democratic platform promised to address the communist arms sales to Egypt “by selling or supplying defensive weapons to Israel” and taking “such steps, including security guarantees, as may be required to deter aggression and war in the area.” The Eisenhower platform was even more explicit, stating: “We regard the preservation of Israel as an important tenet of American foreign policy. We are determined that the integrity of an independent Jewish state shall be maintained. We shall support the independence of Israel against armed aggression.” In both cases, the language suggests that an independent Israel is an instrumental strategic asset in the Cold War. It does not suggest that Israel is

intrinsically or inherently valuable to the United States. There is little real difference between either the policy positions or the language used by the two parties. There is no evidence to suggest a significant role for the organized Jewish community in shaping the platform language on Israel.

While the context is less urgent in 1960, both platforms focus on themes of promoting peace negotiations, resettling refugees, ending boycotts and blockages, and ending the regional arms race resulting from Soviet arms sales to the region. Interestingly, there are no promises of arms sales to Israel -- even though the first U.S. sales of defensive Hawk missiles to Israel take place under in Kennedy in 1962. The Eisenhower administration was already considering such sales as well. The explicit commitments to Israel in the context of the emerging crisis of 1956 are not present in the 1960 platforms -- presumably they no longer seemed necessary. Again, the parties remain quite similar in their platforms.

In 1964, the pledges and themes are almost identical to those of 1960. While the Democratic platform is much more verbose, the pledges on negotiations, refugees, economic and military assistance remain quite similar to four years earlier with little party differentiation. The Democratic platforms throughout the 1960s and 1970s referred to an explicit Soviet threat to the region, while the Republicans referred slightly more subtly to the regional arms race with much the same intent. However, both parties introduced new language about the oppression of Soviet Jews into their 1964 platforms. The references are brief in these platforms and contextualized among other persecuted minorities in the Soviet Union. These references would remain in the platforms of both

parties until the end of the Cold War and would gradually become much more extensive and detailed as the issue of Soviet Jewry became a more politically salient one in the Jewish community.

The decade between the Suez Crisis and the Six-Day War was a relatively quiet period in the Arab-Israeli conflict with relatively little American involvement. The international context had shifted dramatically by the time of the 1968 platforms. The U.S. was stuck in the quagmire of the Vietnam War and the 1967 War had reshaped the region dramatically. The Middle East had taken on a sense of explosive danger with the Democratic platform calling it a “powder keg” while the Republicans considered it to be more of “a tinderbox.” Both parties adopt language similar to UN Security Council Resolution 242 concerning secure borders, territorial integrity, freedom of navigation and negotiations. However, Sen. Humphrey, the Democratic nominee, adopts a much stronger commitment to Israel, pledging that “As long as Israel is threatened by hostile and well-armed neighbors, we will assist her with essential military equipment needed for her defense, including the most advanced types of combat aircraft.” The Republican platform maintained much more balanced language that didn’t take sides. Even though Nixon defeated Humphrey that year, the language of the Democratic platform foreshadowed the language and policy that was to follow in the coming decades.

During the early 1970s, the U.S.-Israel relationship was greatly strengthened as a result of the Nixon/Kissinger reevaluation of Israel’s strategic value following the Black September (1970). The level of U.S. Foreign aid was increased significantly in the early 1970s. The nature of the new strategic alliance was clearly reflected in the reframing of

the relationship in the 1972 party platforms. The language in both platforms had strengthened the commitments greatly over the 1968 platforms. The 1972 Democratic platform stated, "The United States must be unequivocally committed to support of Israel's right to exist within secure and recognized borders." President Nixon's platform differed significantly from that of 1968, stating that Republicans "support the right of Israel and its courageous people to survive and prosper in peace." This represented a dramatic increase in the nature of the political commitment of each party to Israel. Both parties also committed to support peace negotiations, to provide aid for Jewish refugees in Israel, and to provide new arms sales to Israel. The Democratic platform also included language about Jerusalem that would become standard for both parties in the next few years that committed a Democratic administration to "recognize and support the established status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel with free access to all its holy places provided to all faiths. As a symbol of this stand, the U.S. Embassy should be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem." The Democratic Party continued to refer to moving the U.S. Embassy up to its 1984 platform at which point it was dropped. The Republicans picked up the Embassy issue in their platforms from 1996 on.

Following the 1973 War, the Republican commitments to Israel remained relatively similar. The wording of the Democratic platform, however, evolved greatly in the 1976 platform. Still, President Ford's platform described the U.S. commitment to Israel as "fundamental and enduring." President Carter's platform declared that "the cornerstone of our policy is a firm commitment to the independence and security of the State of Israel." Carter's platform also was the first to use the phrase "special

relationship” to describe the U.S.-Israel alliance. The phrase a “special relationship” would become standard Democratic language which would be repeated in all of the Democratic platforms from 1988 to 2004. Also, the 1976 Carter platform used one of the more peculiar, and perhaps telling, expressions when objecting to the 1975 UN General Assembly resolution equating Zionism with Racism, which the platform called “blasphemous.” In other words, the presumably secular platform on an American political platform described UNGA resolution as an affront to God. This seems to hint at the religious/cultural significance that Israel was beginning to take on. Interestingly, this is the only time that the Democratic platform criticized the UN around the issue of Israel. However, as is often the case, themes initially used in Democratic platforms were picked up by the Republicans. Criticism of the UN’s treatment of Israel has been used in practically every Republican platform from 1984 to 2004 (except for 1996). It has become a common theme of Republican rhetoric about Israel. The 1976 Democratic platform was also the first platform to denounce the role of the PLO as a terrorist group that didn’t represent the Palestinian people. The nature of the political debate that had begun to change in the mid-1970s would become apparent in the early 1980s.

The 1980 platforms of both parties reflected the transformed nature of the American commitment to Israel. The Camp David Summit represented by far the deepest involvement of an American President in the nitty-gritty details of the conflict. The 1980 platforms were more than twice as long -- in terms of the number of words devoted to the subject -- as the previous party platforms and spelt out the nature of those commitments in far greater detail than ever before. Carter’s platform reflected the depth of the

Presidential involvement in the conflict; however, it is also clear that fear about the strong-willed role that the President played in pressuring Israel had created real concern in the Jewish community. In 1980, the organized Jewish community became much more engaged in the process of writing the Democratic platform plank on Israel than it had ever been before. Meanwhile, President Reagan's platform reflected the ideological transformation that had occurred within the Republican Party with Reagan's nomination and emergence of the religious right in the Republican Party. These platforms are the first ones in which explicit and outspoken "pro-Israel" voices within both political parties are now strong enough to influence and reshape each party's platform commitments to Israel. At this stage, the parties have moved away from speaking about how they will protect America's broad strategic interests in the Middle East and are much more focused on how they will engage the political priorities of their specific interest groups.

While both parties continued to refer to Soviet Jewry in every platform, the nature of their rhetoric around the Cold War seemed to shift at this point. Before 1980, the Democrats always mentioned the Soviet threat when talking about Israel and the Republicans never did. After all in the preceding years, the Democrats had been the more belligerent cold warriors and the Republicans had been more inclined towards to détente. But by 1980, the parties seemed to switch rhetoric on this issue. The Democrats become far less bellicose as they reevaluated their approach to foreign affairs following the American withdrawal from Vietnam. While both parties referred to the Soviet threat in 1980 -- following the invasion of Afghanistan and the renewal of Cold War tensions -- the Democrats stopped referring to Soviet encroachment in the region as a reason to

support Israel. Conversely, the more aggressive Reagan Republicans used the Soviet threat to frame their support for Israel until the end of the Cold War.

In 1980, the Republicans joined the Democrats and for the first time endorsed an undivided Israeli controlled Jerusalem (which the Democrats had been calling for with more ambiguous language since 1972). The Republican platform joined the Democratic platform in adopting strident anti-PLO language. Also, for the first time, both parties adopted specific statements opposing Palestinian statehood (although Democratic platform did refer, in line with the Camp David Accords, to Palestinian autonomy). This language would reappear several more times in Republican platforms of 1988 and 1992 and at other times would be implicit in anti-PLO language.

For the first time, the Democratic platform adopted language contending that Israel should be supported because it was the only democracy in the Middle East. This language would soon become standard in both party platforms. The Democrats also introduced language that would become standard describing Israel as a “friend” and/or “ally.” Furthermore, both parties for the first time introduced language referring to America’s “moral” obligation to Israel. This language was used by the Democrats only in 1980, but would become standard in future Republican platforms -- presumably reflecting the influence of the religious right and its mindset within the party. Also, very importantly, for the first time both parties adopted language in which they spoke of Israel as a “strategic asset” or “strategic interest” of the United States. This has become standard in the language and rhetoric of both parties ever since.

The major changes seen in the 1980 platforms seem to be more solidly institutionalized by 1984. The Republicans included previously Democratic language about supporting Israel, because it was a democracy and an ally. The Republicans would also adopt language for the first time condemning the U.N. for being anti-Israel. This would become standard Republican language. The Republicans, also for the first time, adopted language speaking of America's "shared values" with Israel. The Republicans dropped the

"shared values" language after 1984, but the Democrats started using it in 1988 and have continued to use it ever since.

There was one important change to both platforms in 1984 presumably as a result of the Reagan administration's controversial sale of AWACS planes to Saudi Arabia. Both parties decided for the first time to include language guaranteeing that Israel's "qualitative edge" over all its adversaries would be preserved. This phrase has become a staple of almost all future platforms and an important rhetorical commitment within both parties to the nature of the "special relationship." It clearly represents a new level of commitment to Israel that had not previously been made.

In 1988, the political language of both parties remained quite similar. Stylistically, the Democratic Party downsized its platform across the board and eliminated a lot of the specific detail -- which for the most part would return in later years. They essentially trimmed their platform to one run-on sentence in which they restored the phrase "special relationship" (which they had first used in 1976 platform) and adopted the phrase "shared values." These phrases have appeared in every

Democratic platform since, while never being used by the Republicans. Other language previously used by the Democrats seems to have been dropped out of a desire for brevity rather than real changes in party positions. The Republican language and commitments remained virtually identical to that used by Reagan in their preceding two platforms. They renewed a specific commitment to oppose the creation of a Palestinian state, which they had first mentioned in their 1980 platform.

Surprisingly, the end of the Cold War did very little to change the 1992 party platforms planks on Israel. Longstanding calls for the release of Soviet Jews -- who were now free to immigrate to Israel -- and references to the Cold War context were dropped. Both parties dropped their opposition to negotiating with the PLO following the precedent set by the 1991 Madrid conference. Also, in the context of the victory of democracy over communism, both parties restored references to supporting Israel, because of its commitment to democracy.

Despite many changes in the Middle East including the advent of the Oslo peace process, little changed in the 1996 platforms. The only significant change seemed to be that the Republicans officially dropped their opposition to a Palestinian state.

The 2000 platforms were written around the time of the Camp David Peace conference and before the outbreak of the renewed violence of the Second *Intifada*. Both parties maintained the established patterns of previous platforms. The Republicans included language (dropped in 1996) criticizing the UN for being anti-Israel and added language criticizing the Red Cross for being anti-Israel -- both themes would reappear in 2004. In the context of the upcoming Camp David II negotiations, both parties

unsurprisingly included nearly identical language opposing a “unilateral declaration of Palestinian statehood.”

By 2004, the situation in the Middle East had been transformed by the 2nd *Intifada*, September 11th and the U.S. invasion of Iraq. In the wake of the President Bush’s shift of U.S. policy in 2002, both parties committed themselves to the eventual, conditional creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel. The themes of the 2004 platform and the understanding of the U.S.-Israel relationship remain remarkably similar to what they have been rhetorical since the early 1980s despite the immense changes in the region and the world since that time. Both parties have remained committed to some sort of peace settlement although the nature of that settlement has evolved somewhat over time. Both parties have remained fundamentally committed to defending Israel’s right to exist, safeguarding its security, and protecting its “qualitative edge” over its adversaries. They continue to remain committed to Israel because of its shared democratic values, its continuing friendship, and its strategic value.

There was, however, one remarkable change in the platforms. Since 1980, both parties had consistently described the U.S.-Israel alliance as a “strategic” asset or “strategic” interest of the United States. This key language disappeared from the Democratic platform in 2000 and was absent from both party platforms in 2004. Both parties stopped claiming that Israel provided a strategic advantage to them and instead asserted that the “special relationship” was based on a commitment to democracy, and other shared values. As the Bush platform asserted in 2000, “we must ensure that Israel remains safe and secure.” The political language of these documents, particularly in the

wake of September 11th, suggests that defending and securing Israel has at least rhetorically become a value in and of itself that the United States undertakes, because it conforms to American values, independent of any strategic advantage that the United States might gain by doing so. Subconsciously, it seems that the security of Israel is no longer viewed as a means to a strategic end, but as an end in and of itself.

In this context, with little or no organized Arab-American community to offer a competing bastion of votes to the parties, the differences between the parties over policy towards Israel mostly evaporated into a contest that is more about culturally-nuanced politics than strategic interests. While the platforms continued to speak of Israel's strategic importance to the United States -- even after the Cold War -- they also increasingly emphasized the moral commitment to the Jewish state and the sense of shared values. In some sense, criticism of Israel or Israeli policies was pushed fringes of the American political spectrum. The mainstreams of both parties -- albeit for differing political reasons -- have grown increasingly unequivocal in their commitment to Israel's security as a value in and of itself. They have also grown increasingly unwilling to express even the slightest substantive of criticism of Israeli government actions -- even when these actions, such as Israeli settlement expansion, undermine the peace process to which the United States has been nominally committed to for decades.

While the framework of events, threats, and situations has changed radically since 1980 -- including the end of the Cold War and the rise of the "War on Terror," the political framework of the U.S.-Israel relationship simply adjusts to the new events, takes them into consideration, and maintains continuity and inertia with the past. It is now quite

clear that the rhetoric of the U.S.-Israel alliance is a product of American culture rather than the ever-changing constellation of strategic threats that the U.S. confronts in the Middle East.

Chapter 7 - The Role of the Jewish Community

“They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.” -- Isaiah 2:4 & Micah 4:3

As we have seen, the most important cultural institution for shaping and interpreting Israel for the public and the policymaking elites is the Jewish community. The Jewish community has acted as a filtering device that has defined Israel's role as a benign friendly ally that is compatible with American culture, values, and beliefs. In so doing, the Jewish community has also emerged as a body that can provide policymakers with legitimacy and credibility in a complex, contested, and emotional policy arena. The pro-Israel Lobby, which mostly as an extension of the mainstream of the Jewish community, provides policymakers with financial and electoral support. The Lobby also provides policymakers with information so that they can easily interpret complex events thousands of miles away. Of course, not surprisingly, the pro-Israel lobby provides policymakers with an extremely mythologized interpretation of Israel that reinforces their cultural pre-dispositions and thus promotes its own policy agenda.

While the most important diplomatic decisions regarding U.S. engagement in the peace process are made by Constitutional design in the Executive Branch, most of the hue and cry of public debate around the Israeli-Palestinian occurs at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue in the hallowed halls of the U.S. Congress. Thus in order to examine the role of the Jewish community it is most useful to look at its role influencing

the public debate within Congress which shapes the contours of the policy debate for the Executive Branch.

Congress and the Jewish Community. In this model, Congress, like the political parties discussed above, is viewed as primarily an intervening and filtering institution. While most of the policy decisions about the Israeli-Palestinian peace process are made in the executive branch a great deal of the debate that shapes the context of those decisions occurs in Congress and most particularly in the nexus between the Congress and the American Jewish community. This raises the question of how the Jewish community, operating in a Post-Cold War context without an overwhelming strategic imperative for the U.S. to support Israel, is able to be so effective at influencing the policies of the U.S. government in support of Israel's priorities.

The Congress's direct role in U.S. foreign policy is relatively limited and focused around budget authority -- in this case, particularly the annual foreign aid budget. However, given the opaqueness of the Executive Branch decision-making processes, much of the public debate and discussion of the peace process occurs within the Legislative Branch. This has a significant affect in shaping the milieu of American foreign policy decision-making. The cultural and political context in which each administration operates is shaped -- to one degree or another -- by views discussed and debated in Congress. Since the Executive Branch has limited contact with the broader public, the Congress acts as a filtering device which listens to, sorts out, and brings the voices of constituents to the Executive Branch via legislation -- both substantive and often symbolic, public and private letters from members of Congress, public hearings, floor

debates, direct discussions, and public appearances. Inevitably, the views within Congress are shaped by both its perception of America's strategic interests and its interaction with variety of interest groups representing many points of view. So while the Congress's direct role is often limited, it does serve to transmit the values, ideas, and concerns of its constituents to the President and his administration. Almost invariably, the views that it transmits to the Executive Branch on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are reflective of the consensus views of the leadership of the Jewish community. As will be discussed below, the views of the leadership of the American Jewish community are often more reflective of the views of the leaders of the existing Israeli coalition government than that of the majority of American Jews.

The politics that inform the manner in which America's strategic interests in the Middle East, and in particular around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, are interpreted by Congress and transmitted to the Executive Branch are largely shaped by American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and its allies in the American Jewish community. As noted in chapter 1, the role of AIPAC's "stealth PACs" certainly play a role in providing AIPAC activists and supporters with easier access and sympathetic ears from members of Congress and their staff, but this role is limited by campaign finance laws to a few million dollars during each 2-year election cycle spread out among many members of Congress. The money gets their lobbyists and supporters in the door of Congressional offices and this often helps them get their specific messages across to members of Congress -- particularly those members of Congress who are already receiving campaign donations, because they are already sympathetic to AIPAC's views.

While campaign donations are relatively limited, AIPAC and its allies are able to spend essentially unlimited -- other than the limits of their fundraising apparatus -- are the amounts of time, money, and effort on educating and informing members of Congress through lobbying and advocacy. Much of AIPAC's success is rooted in skilled use of the tools available to it. According to one recent analysis, AIPAC's annual budget was recently estimated at roughly \$33.4 million. It has 85,000 to 100,000 members, a staff of 165 and offices in 10 regional offices and in Israel.²⁸⁹ This amount dwarfs the amount that the "Stealth PACs" are able to spend on campaign contributions. In fact, the amount of money going into the so-called Stealth PACs has been dropping steadily from a peak of around \$5 million in the 1988 electoral cycle to about \$3 million in 2006 electoral cycle in spite of inflation. AIPAC uses its resources to provide members of Congress with information and to shape their perceptions of Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They bring thousands of supporters to their Annual Policy Conference in Washington, DC to lobby members of Congress. They also specialize in using the access that they have obtained to network and build on-going relationship with members and their staffs. This allows their supporters to provide members with information and guidance on how to understand and interpret Israel and its role in the Middle East. Not surprisingly, they provide the members of Congress and their staffs with the most benign interpretations of Israel's actions -- based on their own deeply sympathetic viewpoints. At the AIPAC

²⁸⁹ Edsal, Thomas B. & Molly Moore. "Pro-Israel Lobby Has Strong Voice: AIPAC Is Embroiled in Investigation of Pentagon Leaks." Washington Post. (September 5, 2004): Page A10. This figure is a few years old and is probably a bit higher at this time. Center for Public Integrity quotes AIPAC as claiming 100,000 members in 2006.

policy conference, participants are trained to stick to very carefully prepared talking points. Furthermore, AIPAC and their allies regularly provide Capitol Hill briefings on the Middle East to members and their staffs. Through a supporting organization called the American Israel Education Foundation, AIPAC provide members and their staffs with educational trips to Israel where they are shown AIPAC's selective interpretation of political, military, and historical reality.²⁹⁰ Their work is actually made very easy, because most of the members and their staffs are already sympathetic to their viewpoints. As one AIPAC staffer explained to a researcher in 1992:

The product itself -- the latest public opinion poll -- shows that 80 percent of the American people support aid to Israel. We have a product that the average American is willing to support. We get involved with all (members) regardless of party, but the issue is that the product is a sellable product. We don't convince them of things if they didn't think it made sense.²⁹¹

Since most of the members of Congress and their staffs have already been culturally conditioned to see Israel as a vital strategic asset, it is relatively easy to sell them on legislative priorities that are framed as being "pro-Israel." In a larger sense, they rely on the reality that most members are not experts on the Middle East and, having to deal with

²⁹⁰ The Center for Public Integrity reports that "The American Israel Education Foundation spent more than \$950,000 on congressional travel from January 2000 through mid-2005, virtually all of it on trips to Israel."
<http://www.publicintegrity.org/powertrips/default.aspx?act=profiles&pid=1>

²⁹¹ Solomon, Morris S. "The Agenda and Political Techniques of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)" The Industrial College of the Armed Forces, National Defense University, Fort McNair, Washington, DC, 1993: 10. Quoted from an interview with Barry Gold.

dozens of issues each session, often vote on the basis of limited information and knowledge filtered through their staff members and informed by their existing preconceptions. The simple conclusion is that while campaign contributions are a factor in candidate thinking they do not dictate how members vote on these issues.

Politically speaking, there is no foreign policy lobby widely considered more influential than AIPAC as the primary voice of the mainstream of the American Jewish Community.²⁹² AIPAC, however, does not act as the singular voice of the mainstream Jewish community in Congress. Although it has been in some sense the lead organization in shaping the Jewish message to Congress over last 30 years, there are literally dozens of American Jewish organizations -- mostly headquartered in DC -- that regularly lobby Congress including, but not limited to: Jewish Council for Public Affairs (which represents the Jewish Community Relations Councils across the country), numerous local Jewish Federations, the American Jewish Committee, the Zionist Organization of America (representing the far right), the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting (CAMERA), Americans for a Safe Israel, the Israel Project, Palestine Media Watch, the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), Washington Institute for Near East Policy, the various Rabbinical and lay bodies of the Reform, Conservative movements, a variety of Orthodox movements, and a large number of local rabbis and congregations around the country. Recently, the formation of Christians United for Israel (CUFI) has brought an organized

²⁹² The only other ethnic lobby that comes close to playing such a dominant role in shaping a regional foreign policy is the Cuban American Foundation which dominates the debate on American policy towards Cuba.

fundamentalist Christian voice that acts as a Christian ally in support of AIPAC's positions on Israel.²⁹³ While there are certainly nuances among these groups, by and large, they have consistently spoken to Congress with a singular voice in asking the United States to provide Israel with practically unquestioned economic, political, diplomatic, and military support.

One of the key components of the coalition described above are the local religious institutions -- both Jewish and Christian -- that transmit much of the broad contours of AIPAC's message back to local communities in practically every corner of the country. Local religious institutions offer an important filtering device for their parishioners, and sometimes the broader community, in attempting to contextualize the Israeli-Palestinian conflict both theologically and politically. The above-mentioned CUFI actually defines its primary mission as educating "Christians on the biblical and moral imperatives of supporting Israel."²⁹⁴ While the Fundamentalist Christian right is not the only Christian voice speaking about Israel, it is by far the most outspoken.

A similar situation exists with Jewish religious and secular institutions. Synagogues and Jewish Federations are highly engaged in the process of educating both the Jewish community, and the broader gentile community, about Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, most of their educational programming around Israel for

²⁹³ <http://www.cufi.org/>. See also David Brog. Standing with Israel. (New York: Frontline, 2006). Brog is Christians United for Israel's Executive Director. The Founder is Rev. John C. Hagee of Cornerstone Church in San Antonio.

²⁹⁴ <http://www.cufi.org/>

both children and adults is filtered through the above-mentioned mainstream Jewish organizations (including AIPAC) and the extensive Israel's consular network in the United States. Their message is one that is designed to promote conformity with community norms. While there are occasional exceptions, most of their educational work tends to reinforce the mythologies of the existing cultural framework rather than encourage any sort of healthy skepticism.

As suggested by the Adler memo (cited above in Chapter 4), the Jewish community has long attempted to speak to the U.S. government with a singular voice about Israel. The American Jewish community has also long defined support for Israel as support for the policies of each democratically-elected government of Israel almost regardless of content of those policies. Even when many of the members of the Jewish community personally disagree with specific Israeli policies, the American Jewish communal organizations have almost always spoken publicly and to the U.S. Congress in a singularly unified voice that asks for American support of Israeli policies. For example, this was particularly evident in 2005 when many American Jews were deeply distrustful of Ariel Sharon decision to withdraw unilaterally from the Gaza Strip. With the exception of a few far right organizations, the mainstream Jewish organization offered wide-ranging support for Ariel Sharon's policies that many were personally skeptical of. In many cases, the reasoning for this approach is imbedded in the assumption that most American Jews are not Israeli citizens and that Israelis and their leaders know what's best for Israel.

A peculiar irony of this situation is that public opinion research consistently shows that the views of American Jews are often quite different from those of the Israeli government whose views they often public articulate. As J.J. Goldberg, editor of the Forward has noted: “a majority of American Jews favor Palestinian statehood, and that a significant majority favor ceding a significant amount of territory on the West Bank and withdrawing from the settlements.”²⁹⁵ The 2006 Annual Survey of American Jewish Opinion confirmed a viewpoint that by-and-large has been consistent among American Jews. That poll found that when American Jews were asked “In the current situation, do you favor or oppose the establishment of a Palestinian state?” 54% favored a Palestinian state while only 38% opposed one.²⁹⁶

The leading Jewish organizations that speak for the Jewish community have defined being “pro-Israel” as reflecting the view of the Israeli government rather reflecting an independent analysis of what is in the best interests of the Israeli people or world Jewry. This definition has also been broadly accepted by the vast majority of members of the U.S. Congress, which consistently votes by overwhelming margins in support of policies priorities shaped by AIPAC and its allies that strongly favor the policies implicitly or explicitly endorsed by the Israeli government. In recent years, this has included support for moving the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem,

²⁹⁵ Massing, Michael. “The Storm over the Israel Lobby.” New York Review of Books. (Volume 53, Number 10, June 8, 2006) <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/19062>

²⁹⁶ American Jewish Committee. 2006 Annual Survey of American Jewish Opinion. <http://www.ajc.org/site/apps/nl/content2.asp?c=ijITI2PHKoG&b=2174431&ct=3152887>

supporting the construction of the security barrier, placing sanctions on Syria and Iran and providing billions of unrestricted dollars of foreign aid to Israel while placing severe restrictions on the limited supply of aid money provided to the Palestinian Authority. All of these efforts act in affect to place the United States government squarely in support of Israeli government positions and reinforce Israeli resistance to advancing the Middle East peace process.

At this stage, it is useful to consider voting patterns among the members of Congress to see whether there are any particular demographics, party affiliations, or geographic affiliations that lead members of Congress more-or-less likely to support AIPAC's priorities in Congress. A statistical analysis of voting patterns in the U.S. House of Representatives during the 108th and 109th Congresses is highly suggestive of the relationship between Congressional voting and interest groups. (See a summary in Appendix G) In this study, members were ranked depending on whether they supported political positions that favored progressive political positions that supported the Middle East peace process as compared to whether they supported the priorities of AIPAC and other right-wing groups that advocated positions that undermined the ability to advance the peace process. While such analysis is somewhat subjective, the patterns produced were remarkably clear.

Republican members of Congress, with a few significant exceptions, were much more likely to vote for AIPAC's preferred positions than Democrats. This is initially surprising since the Jewish community overwhelming votes for Democrats. The most

likely explanation is that the strong and growing influence of both the religious right and the neo-conservative foreign policy of the Bush administration have shaped the thinking of Republicans members. While AIPAC used to be closer to the Democratic Party, there has been a clear trend towards the Republicans, and particularly the neo-Conservatives, since the Republicans gained control of both houses of Congress in 1994.²⁹⁷ Male members vote for AIPAC's positions more than female. This is most probably simply because the female members of Congress are more likely to be Democrats. For similar reasons, African-American, Hispanic, and Asian members of Congress are less likely to support AIPAC's positions. In terms of religion, Jews and members of more Conservative protestant Churches are more likely to agree with AIPAC's positions.

The most intriguing pattern is of regional and state voting patterns. The U.S. House members for those states typically referred to as "red states" -- states that voted for Republican George W. Bush in 2000 and 2004 -- overwhelmingly voted in favor of AIPAC positions. These are mostly states, which typically, also have Republican-dominated Congressional delegations. Broadly speaking these are states in the South and the West. This is suggestive of the degree to which the vast majority of Republican members of Congress support AIPAC's positions, which coincides with the positions aggressively advocated by the religious right and neo-conservatives on this issue.

By contrast almost all of the states whose Congressional delegations voted for pro-peace positions were states that voted for the Democratic Party in the Presidential

²⁹⁷ It is too early to begin to evaluate whether the Democrats regaining control over Congress will result in a shift of AIPAC to align itself more closely with the Congressional majority again.

election (or so-called “Blue” states) and have mostly Democratic representatives in Congress. There were, however, several intriguing exceptions to this rule. There are several Democratic-dominated states where members of Congress voted in a manner that was much more in favor of AIPAC’s positions. This pattern was most pronounced in New York, New Jersey, and Florida (a state that is typically closely divided between Democrats and Republicans in Presidential voting). This pattern is visible to a lesser degree in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Connecticut.

The initial hypothesis that these were all states with relatively large Jewish populations turned out to be only partially explanatory. While all of these Democratic-leaning states had Jewish populations of at least 2%, so did California, Massachusetts and Illinois whose members of the House of Representatives had much more anti-AIPAC oriented voting records. However, the pattern of voting for AIPAC’s positions in Congress correlated highly with having a high percentage of Orthodox synagogues in the state. The pattern was particularly strong in the northeastern states of New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Maryland. States with more Orthodox synagogues than Reform synagogues are much more likely to have representatives that vote in favor AIPAC’s positions in Congress. Intuitively this thesis makes sense, because the Orthodox Jewish communities, while generally smaller, are more tightly knit, well-organized, closely connected to Israel, highly politically homogenous, and generally highly supportive of right-wing Israeli policies such as West Bank settlement expansion on religious grounds. In some Hasidic communities, particularly in New York, the communities are known for

bloc voting for particular candidates designated by their rabbinic leadership. The likely explanation is that well-organized Orthodox communities are able to skew the debate within the larger Jewish community so that the voices that members of Congress in those states hear from a variety of sources are more likely to be in favor of unfettered support for Israeli policies. In states like Massachusetts, California, Washington, and Oregon, where the Orthodox communities are smaller and the progressive Jewish voices are stronger and better organized, members of Congress are more likely to be far less responsive to AIPAC political priorities around Israel. They are more likely to be responsive to the progressive Jewish voices that they are more likely to hear. As is often the case, members of Congress are more likely to be responsive not to lightly-held, softly-spoken majority in their communities, but rather to voices of well-organized, intensely interested, highly outspoken subgroups within their constituencies and surrounding constituencies.

In this context, the role of New York City plays particularly interesting element in the existing cultural framework that shapes the U.S.-Israel alliance. New York's Jewish community -- largest Jewish community in the country -- seems to act as a culture filter. New York City's politics and history are particularly closely linked to the Jewish community and through the Jewish community to Israel. For example, New York politicians often campaign for Jewish votes by visiting Israel and promising American Jews that they will work to keep Israel safe and secure. In one particularly peculiar incident in 1995, New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani expelled Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat from a concert at Lincoln Center that New York City was hosting to celebrate the

50th anniversary of the United Nations. The issue of Israel's security is deeply connected to political life in New York where the Jewish community has an omnipresent cultural role.

By coincidence, New York also happens to be location of most America's media. America's paper of record, the New York Times, is owned by a Jewish family and often gives what many critics would suggest is disproportionate attention to issues involving Israel. Logically, this would seem to be because it has many Jewish editors, writers, and readers. Stories from the New York Times are often reprinted in local papers and cited on network and cable news broadcasts. The major network news broadcasts also originate from studios in Manhattan. Many network and cable news program originate in New York. Many late night comedians, who are often political barometers, such as Saturday Night Live and the Daily Show, record their shows in New York City. Much of theatrical world is centered there. The vast majority of major book and many music publishers are also based in New York. While the largest concentration of the film industry is in Hollywood -- where Jews are also overrepresented -- New York remains the 2nd largest center for movie production and financing. Although they not usually thought of as cultural barometers, New York is also central to the financial markets and banking industry -- which are surely important in transmitting some form of capitalistic values to the rest of the country. Thus ideas and trends that are important to New York including much about the cultural role of American Jews and Israel is transmitted through New York's filter to the rest of the country. Although its an almost impossible to prove definitively, most commentators would agree that the September 11th attacks were

targeted at the World Trade Center, because it had become such an overwhelmingly powerful cultural icon of American capitalism. Of course, the September 11th attacks reverberated across the country in ways great and small. September 11th has undoubtedly further elevated emotional connection of most Americans to their largest city and likely increased the sense of empathy and connection that many Americans felt for its dominant ethnic group.

In some sense, New York has become the filter for much America's secular culture, while the Bible -- as discussed above -- remains the filter for much of American religious culture. Coincidentally, Israel and Jews are positioned to play privileged roles in both these generally contrasting narratives of American society. While it perhaps too simplistic, one could argue that New York is the primary filter through which much of the basically positive secular images of Jews, particularly well-known Jewish celebrities, are transmitted to secular liberal "blue state" voters. At the same time, the Bible acts as a filtering device for presenting the Jews as God's "Chosen people" in many of the messages transmitted to conservative Christian "red state" voters. In this context, it is not surprising that the public opinion data cited above indicates that for many decades Americans have had overwhelming positive opinions of both of Israel and Israelis and negative views of their adversaries. The two of the largest and usually contrasting streams of thought within American culture unexpectedly converge with positive and sympathetic views of Jews and Israel. As has been described above, there are significant differences in the nuanced pictures that each side of the culture war has of Israel, but both filter create overwhelmingly positive images.

The Holocaust and Jewish Identity. Let us now briefly consider how the American Jewish identity shapes the behavior of American Jews and how they behave politically in regard to Israel. The description in Chapters 2 and 3 and provides a context for the looking at the unique role that the American Jewish community has played in shaping the cultural framework that surrounds American foreign policy towards Israel. The framework of the Holocaust experience has in many ways become the defining narrative of the modern Jewish history that most clearly shapes the Jewish connection to both Israel and America. Most Jews, even those not directly affected by the Nazi genocide, share certain elements of the mentality of Holocaust survivors.²⁹⁸ Zygmunt Bauman wrote that:

Half-a-century has passed since the victory of the Allied troops put an abrupt end to Hitler's "final solution of the Jewish question" -- but the memory of the Holocaust goes on polluting the world of the living, and the inventory of its insidious poisons seems anything but complete. We are all to some degree possessed by that memory, though the Jews among us, the prime targets of the Holocaust, are perhaps more than most. For Jews especially, living in a world contaminated with the possibility of a Holocaust rebounds time and again in fear and horror. To many, the world appears suspect at the core; no worldly event is truly neutral -- each event is burdened with sinister undertones, each contains an ominous message for the Jews, a message that can be overlooked or played down only to the Jews' own peril.... The percept of staying alive as the sole thing that counts, as the supreme value that dwarfs all other values, is among the most tempting, and the most common, interpretations of the lesson.... humankind is divided into the victims and the victimizers, and so if you are (or expect to be) a victim, your task is to reverse the tables ("the stronger lives"). It is this lesson that the specter of the Holocaust whispers into many ears.... The pernicious legacy of the Holocaust is that today's persecutors may inflict new pains and create new generations of victims

²⁹⁸ For a fascinating study of how Israeli Jewish identity is interconnected to the Holocaust see Segev, Tom. The Seventh Million (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993).

eagerly awaiting their chance to do the same. While acting under the conviction that they avenge yesterday's pain and ward off the pains of tomorrow -- while being convinced, in other words, that ethics is on their side. This is perhaps the most awesome among the Holocaust's curses and the greatest of Hitler's posthumous victories.²⁹⁹

For many Jews, both in the United States and in Israel, each threat to the security of the state of Israel -- including terrorism -- is widely viewed as an existential threat to the survival of the Jewish people. Given the enormity of the Holocaust, it is hardly surprising that the Jews, even those living safely and securely in the United States, should suffer from an exaggerated traumatic fear of persecution. Nor is sympathy among Americans -- who failed to help the Jews -- particularly surprising. In the United States, the Holocaust almost completely de-legitimized anti-Semitism and broadly legitimated the right of the Jews to a state of their own. The result from an American perspective is a bit ironic. Israel was created to protect Jews from anti-Semitism experienced in the West, but the very anti-Semitism that American Jews feared began to disappear as a result of the very same horrific events that also legitimized the creation of that state. As a result, only a small trickle of American Jews has actually immigrated to Israel during the past half-century.

Ironically, the impact of the Holocaust, and the centuries of religious persecution that preceded it, is that Jews in both America and Israel are as safe and secure as they have ever been, but are almost completely unable to perceive of themselves as being secure. The Holocaust wiped out one-third of World Jewry and destroyed its most

²⁹⁹ Bauman, Zygmunt. "The Holocaust's Life as a Ghost." Tikkun. (Vol. 33, No. 4, July/August 1998): 33, 36.

vibrant political and cultural center -- the Yiddish culture of Eastern Europe. The trauma of these events has left a mark on Jewish identity that has redefined Jewish conceptions of self. Even those who were not direct survivors of the Holocaust share some sense of the feeling of fear and powerlessness with the survivors. The community itself might be said to be a survivor. Historian David Biale notes in his analysis of the history of Jewish power and powerlessness that:

The Jewish tradition...is strangely unhistorical. The traditional Jew sees his history as through the lens of memory, for which all events are cyclical recurrences of ancient archetypes. One might say that this very notion of a recurring Jewish destiny remained deeply rooted even in [the first Israeli Prime Minister David] Ben Gurion, the most secular of Zionists: in attempting to revolt against this destiny, Ben Gurion accepted the traditional view of recurrent cycles.... If Jews typically see themselves as less powerful than they really are, anti-Semites....portray them [Jews] as much more powerful.... Afraid of feeding these bizarre delusions, many Jews shrink from acknowledging the actual power they possess. The reality...lies somewhere between Jewish fear and anti-Semitic fantasy. Traumatic historical memories play as great a role in the Jews' misperception of their contemporary power. Every nation labors under the burden of its own history, caught in the tensions between its understanding of history and current political realities; these tensions are often the cause of misguided political decisions.... For Jews, contemporary political problems return inevitably and fatefully to the Holocaust, the final denouement of European Jewish history. The Jews have classically defined their history as unique, and in many ways it is. Their victimization by the Nazis revived anew the sense of uniqueness, at a time when ideologies of "normalization" had begun to undermine the concept of a Chosen People. For many, the return of Jews to sovereignty could be understood only against the backdrop of the Holocaust, the epitome of the powerlessness of a powerless people: the Holocaust became a metaphor for the special character of all Jewish history, and only Jewish sovereignty could be a response to this condition of impotence.³⁰⁰

³⁰⁰ Biale, David. Power & Powerlessness in Jewish History. (New York: Schocken Books, 1986): 8, 207-208. Brackets added for clarification.

In the past half-century, American Jews have achieved remarkable success and prominence in American life -- particularly in academia, publishing, the law, the media, politics, and entertainment -- both TV and film. All of these fields play major roles in shaping public opinion. In so doing, American Jews have through a process of almost subconscious osmosis grafted their perception of their own powerlessness and vulnerability and of Israel's on to the American national psyche -- a form of "false consciousness," if you will.

This unique sense of consciousness was not created out of a desire to control others or to increase the power and influence of the group. Rather the Jewish consciousness is a product of a genuine, albeit at times irrational, traumatic fears of persecution rooted in a long history Jewish powerlessness and persecution. While it is not entirely rational to believe that history is forever cyclical, it is indeed very human. Again, Former Vice-President Gore seems to encapsulate the images of Jewish history that have been transmitted into the American psyche. In 1998, he told AIPAC's National Policy Conference in somewhat hyperbolic language of the relationship between the Jewish history of victimization and his support for Israel:

I reaffirm my own faith in God, and I am inspired by the fact that the Jewish faith is unfailing even though the Jewish people have *endured more suffering and more injustice than any other people in the history of this earth....* I believe, and the people of the United States of America believe, that when a people endure over *40 centuries of suffering* -- enslavement by the pharaohs, wanderings in Canaan, destruction in Judah, captivity in Babylon, oppression by the Romans, expulsion again, persecutions and sufferings and pogroms, culminating in the unspeakably horrific frenzy of evil at the hands of the Nazis -- justice demands a home,

demand a state, demand for them security -- peace with security, enduring.³⁰¹

Within this larger cultural context of Manichean struggle between good and evil, the Holocaust is held up as the greatest example of the struggle between good and evil and the Jews as history's greatest victim. This mental construct is then applied to the modern-day Middle East of which most Americans have a very limited understanding. Few ordinary Americans are able to make the mental jump that the historical condition of the Jewish people has been transformed greatly by the creation of an independent Jewish state. Jewish victimhood serves as a basis for justifying, defending and rationalizing most actions taken by Israel as "self-defense." Within this sort of cultural paradigm, is a self-reinforcing component. Often times, criticism of Israeli policies and actions are labeled as not only "anti-Israel," but often as "anti-Semitic." This creates greater barriers of hyper-sensitivity making it that much more difficult to challenge a cultural construction of political reality. In recent years, the rise in anti-Semitic attacks in Europe and the extremist rhetoric of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad have been widely used to reinforce Jewish fears and strengthen the existing cultural paradigm.

Thus, America's "special relationship" with the State of Israel has become a part of America's civil religion. Gradually America's sense of political and moral obligation to Israeli survival and security has become the paramount concern of American foreign policy in the Middle East. Many Americans feel a moral obligation not just to the Israeli

³⁰¹ AIAPC Policy Conference, Washington, D.C., May 18, 1998.
<http://www.aipac.org/pc98/webcasts/gore0518.shtml>. Italics added for emphasis.

state, but to the protecting the Israeli people from further pain and suffering. American strategic interests in the region have thus been defined in culturally-contingent terms. Areas of strategic convergence and divergence are compartmentalized so as not to negatively impact the on-going vitality of the political alliance. The convergence of all of these cultural factors -- the rise of the religious right, the decline of anti-Semitism, the increasingly negative stereotypes of Arabs and Islam, and the pernicious aftereffects of the Holocaust -- have enhanced a climate of cultural intimacy and moral obligation to the Jewish State. This leads to an inherent sympathy for Israel within the American political establishment and the American public as a whole. Peter Grose's Israel in the Mind of America, which focuses on the fascinating historical relationship between America and the pre-state Zionist movement, summarizes the peculiar relationship between America and the Israel:

Liking it or not, Americans who are willing to look see something of themselves in Israel. Even as they go their own way, in pursuit of their own national interests, Americans and Israelis are bonded together like no two other sovereign peoples. As the Judaic heritage flowed through the minds of America's early settlers and helped to shape the new American republic, so Israel restored adopted the vision and the values of the American dream. Each, the United States and Israel, grafted the heritage of the other onto itself.³⁰²

It is as if Americans and Israelis looking at each other through a mirror, or perhaps a prism, and see a reflection of themselves in the other. It is these perceived bonds that actually anchor the often misunderstood "special relationship." Americans

³⁰² Grose, Peter. Israel in the Mind of America. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983): 316.

Christians see the Jews as sharing their Judeo-Christian values and feel some guilty over the awful suffering that Christians have inflicted upon the Jewish people over centuries. Thus American political culture humanizes Jews and dehumanizes Arabs. While Jewish suffering resonates with the American public, the suffering of dehumanized Arabs and Muslims is so often overlooked. To Americans, Jews are real people -- their favorite actors and comedians, their doctor, their lawyer and their friends and neighbors; while conversely Arabs and Muslims are often seen as distant negative violent stereotyped abstractions. These images have allowed Americans to focus on Israel's virtues and ignore and/or rationalize Israel's vices.

As a result, American policy towards Israel is compartmentalized on the basis of cultural predispositions stemming from the contours of American domestic political culture. Those areas of strategic agreement and shared interest between the U.S. and Israel are emphasized -- particularly in Congress. Those areas are defined as central to the relationship and through a process of selective collective memory continually reinforced resulting in an ever-increasing sense intimacy and cooperation. Conversely, areas of strategic disagreement -- particularly issues involving the Middle East peace process -- are often downplayed and defined as peripheral to the maintenance of the overall relationship. It is only within such a political culture that Jewish suffering can be privileged and the suffering of other peoples minimized. It is only within this sort of political culture that the lobbying efforts of AIPAC could succeed in maintaining a consistently high support for Israel with the American public and within the U.S.

government. And it is these unique cultural bonds that make possible the special, and truly unique, political alliance between the United States and the State of Israel.

Searching for Alternative Voices.³⁰³ Another part of the answer as to why AIPAC's voice is so dominant in American political debate is that the nature of America's political and mass culture has simply foreclosed the presence of significant alternative political voices. Unfortunately for those trying to bring about a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, significant structural, institutional, and cultural barriers exist which have made it extremely difficult for the organizations seeking to market alternative interpretations of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the mass public and the political elite. While such voices do exist, they are often extremely marginal and essentially remain politically isolated and ineffective. Their messages generally run counter to mainstream cultural views of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict undermining their ability to gain attention in the media and widespread public support. They are even further marginalized within the Jewish community, which is most often accepted in the public debate as the authoritative voice on the conflict.

A large part of the explanation is embedded in demographics and immigration patterns within American society. The Arab-American Institute reports that there is a population of roughly 3.5 million Arab-Americans. The older more established part of this population is mostly Christians who often doesn't identify strongly with its Arab

³⁰³ Some of the observations and analysis in this section are based on the author's personal observation and participation in campaigns and efforts of a number of organizations involved with the American Jewish peace movement.

heritage or with the struggles of Palestinians -- which is overwhelmingly Muslim. The Muslim-Arab community (including Palestinian-Americans) is mostly 1st and 2nd generation immigrants and not yet well positioned economically and socially to offer a strong political voice. The larger community of Muslim-Americans -- estimated at 5 to 6 million -- is mostly new immigrants as well and mostly from non-Arab countries. For example, the large numbers of Muslims from the Indian subcontinent are more likely to identify with issues around Kashmir than the Israeli-Palestinian issues. Another segment of this population is also made up of relatively recent African-American converts to Islam. This group is often more interested in issues that directly affect the African-American underclass in the United States. The Orientalist and anti-Arab, anti-Islamic patterns described above often further undermine the degree to which such groups are able to have their voices heard in public debates on American policy towards the Middle East.

Within Congress itself, their voices have also long been marginalized as a result of public attitudes and voting patterns. While the Muslim community is roughly the same size as the Jewish community, remarkably, it was not until 2006 that a Muslim-American, Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN), an African-American convert to Islam, became the first Muslim ever elected to the Congress of the United States.³⁰⁴ In a telling political

³⁰⁴ There are a few Arab-American Christian members of Congress such as Senator John Sununu (R-NH) and Rep. Darrel Issa (R-CA), but their families have all been in the United States for several generations. By contrast, there are 30 Jewish members of the House of Representatives and 13 Jewish Senators serving in the 110th Congress alongside Ellison.

incident, right-wing critics publicly argued that it was inappropriate for Rep. Ellison to take his ceremonial oath of office on a Koran rather than a Jewish or Christian Bible. One critic wrote that Ellison should not be allowed to do so because “the act undermines American civilization.”³⁰⁵ In a powerful symbolic move that sent the message that Islam was as American as Judaism and Christianity, Ellison arranged to take his ceremonial oath of office on Thomas Jefferson’s copy of the Koran -- which he borrowed from the Library of Congress.

There are a few small Arab and Islamic organizations that lobby Congress on the Israeli-Palestinian issue. These include Arab-American Institute (AAI), the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the Palestinian American Congress, and the American Task Force on Palestine. All of these organizations lack the resources to pose any sort of coherent alternative voice to AIPAC and its allies. Over time, it seems likely that these newer populations may be able to adapt to American society, and as the Jewish population did, find stronger political voice, but this is a slow generational process that will likely take decades.

Nor are the alternative voices coming from secular and interfaith progressive organizations particularly promising as means of addressing these issues. There are a plethora of small “anti-Occupation” groups spread across the country. Most are small groups with limited resources that are often as perceived by the larger community as

³⁰⁵ Dennis Praeger, “America, Not Keith Ellison, decides what book a congressman takes his oath on.” (November 28, 2006) See: http://dennisprager.townhall.com/columnists/DennisPrager/2006/11/28/america,_not_keith_ellison,_decides_what_book_a_congressman_takes_his_oath_on

marginal groups with radical agendas. Most of these groups are loosely associated with the U.S. Campaign to End the Occupation which is a small organization with a very limited budget, staff, and few resources. There are a few larger national peace groups that address the Israeli-Palestinian issue in the context of broader multi-issue agendas including the Network of Spiritual Progressives/Tikkun Community, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, United for Peace and Justice (mostly an anti-War organization), and some progressive Church groups such as the Quaker-based American Friends Service Committee and Churches for Middle East Peace. Thus far, these groups have not been able to provide a coherent political alternative that has been able to have significant political influence in Congress. They have lacked the financial resources, supporters, and political skills to have a significant effect.

Many of the local groups associated with the U.S. Campaign focus on ending the Occupation without advocating specifically for a two-state solution. In order to reach out to the far leftist activists they often support either a 1-state or a two-state solution. This allows them to bring in the far left, but completely marginalizes them within the Jewish community which understands any advocacy of a 1-state solution as a “pro-Palestinian”, “anti-Zionist”, “anti-Israel” position. Without the ability to be heard in any fashion by the organized Jewish community, these groups are basically marginalized within the mainstream political discourse.

Another part of their difficulty is that these groups often use rhetoric that directly conflicts with the norms and values of the broader American society in which they operate. For example, they often run campaigns using themes such as “pro-Palestinian”

or “anti-Occupation” in which they seek to define Israel as an “apartheid state” or a “state-sponsor of terrorism” or “a violator of human rights.” By and large these campaigns have been ineffective within both the Jewish community or with the larger American public. They have sought to achieve goals such as having the United States force Israel to change its policies by cutting off foreign aid, diplomatic support, weapons sales or military cooperation. They have often operated from the premise that if the U.S.-Israel alliance was essentially ended and the U.S. stopped supporting the Israeli Occupation policies that Israel would be forced to reach a peace agreement with the Palestinians. The underlying assumption is that this is the only way to bring about an end to the Israeli Occupation policies. Arguably, their lack of success is a direct result of their failure to understand how deeply imbedded the U.S.-Israel alliance is in American culture. Such campaigns and tactics have by and large reflected the viewpoints of marginal, essentially counter-cultural, groups which being estranged from the broader American society are unable to create messages with the mass appeal necessary to prove politically persuasive. Regardless of how much truth or fairness such campaigns, slogans, organizations may contain, they have proved politically ineffective, because they simply run counter to the broad “pro-Israel” consensus within the American body politic. Since their views contradict the established cultural framework through which most Americans and most members of Congress view the Middle East conflict, their views have tended to remain marginalized in the media, public discourse, and within Congress. There is little indication that Arab, Muslim, or radical leftist groups are going to be able to marshal the extensive economic resources necessary to transform U.S. policy.

This research has shown that the Jewish community remains the key group in shaping the cultural contours of the political elite's understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Thus the last possibility for an alternative voice comes from within the Jewish community itself. As noted above, the American Jewish community usually doesn't assert its own view of the conflict independent of that expressed by the government of Israel. The leading organizations of the American Jewish Community, which are supposed to speak for the larger community to Congress and the administration, have consistently promoted extremely cautious policies that have tended to slow down or oppose the goal of achieving a comprehensive two-state solution. In so doing, they are speaking not as the representatives of the views of American Jewish community, which as noted above, consistently supports a two-state solution in public opinion polls, but instead presenting the views of the Israeli government through the voices of the American Jews. Thus the American Jewish community consistently turns its voice over to the views of the democratically-elected Israeli government and consistently forfeits its ability to act as a truly independent actor and articulate its own independent view of what policies are in Israel's best interest. The broadly accepted assumption in the Jewish community is that since American Jews do not choose to live in Israel, they have essentially chosen to forfeit their right to speak independently on what the "Jewish state" should do and, therefore, should defer to the Israeli government that has been elected by the majority of Israeli citizens living in Israel.³⁰⁶

³⁰⁶ Except for members of the diplomatic corps and the military, Israel does not have a system of overseas absentee voting. Israeli citizens who are living or traveling abroad at the time of the election are thus not given the option of voting. Thus voting is

These groups that claim to represent the voice of the American Jews are in practice basically self-selected leadership. Consider the most important of these organizations, AIPAC. According to Michael Massing:

Power rests with the fifty-odd member board of directors, which is selected not according to how well they represents AIPAC's members but according to how much money they give and raise. Reflecting this, the board is thick with corporate lawyers, Wall Street investors, business executives, and heirs to family fortunes. With the board itself, power is concentrated in an extremely rich subgroup, known as the "minyan club." And, within that group, four members are dominant: Robert Asher....Edward Levy....Mayer "Bubba" Mitchell; and....Larry Weinberg....Asher, Levy, and Mitchell are loyal Republicans; Weinberg is a Scoop Jackson Democrat who has moved rightward over the years. The "Gang of Four," as these men are known, do not share the general interest of a large part of Jewish community in promoting peace in the Middle East. Rather, they seek to keep Israel strong, the Palestinians weak, and the United States from exerting pressure on Israel.³⁰⁷

Although, Massing doesn't frame it this way, these wealthy individuals are really products of their cultural environment. These men and the organization they lead reflect a set of cultural norms that see Israeli actions as consistently benign and Palestinian/Arab/Muslim actions as an existential threat to Israeli survival. Their views are deeply reflective of a set of cultural norms that include an Orientalist view of Middle East and have been shaped by the trauma of the Holocaust. They have established themselves and AIPAC in the position to speak as the corporate voice of the Jewish

tied to actual residence within the physical boundaries of Israel. This tends to reinforce the idea that Jews living abroad -- whether or not they are Israeli citizens -- do not have the right to make decisions for the "Jewish state."

³⁰⁷ Massing, Michael. "The Storm over the Israel Lobby." New York Review of Books. (Volume 53, Number 10, June 8, 2006) http://www.nybooks.com/articles/article-preview?article_id=19062

community even thought their views are, in fact, the opposite of what most American Jews believe. This is another reflection of how the most intensely interested groups -- especially if they are well-funded -- are able to dominate political debate. While the majority of the community may disagree with them, they do not have the interest/intensity and the money to make their views heard. So, in essence, a relatively small group of wealthy individuals is able to project their own cultural norms as speaking as the collective view of the Jewish community. This is enhanced by the norm within the community that it must speak with one voice in support of the policies of the Israeli government.

Since there is a significant gap between what the Jewish community believes about the importance of a two-state solution to the Middle East conflict and the message that the much of the leadership of the Jewish community transmits in its name to the political elites, this seems to be the most promising avenue for development of an alternative voice that can challenge the views that are articulated by AIPAC and most of the leadership of the Jewish establishment. A division within the community where a variety of opinions were expressed rather than a position that almost always express views in support of the Israeli government policies could, potentially transform the nature of the political debate in Congress and, through Congress, in the Executive Branch.

Over the last several decades there have been several efforts to build Jewish political alternatives to AIPAC which have failed. These include Breira (which means the "Alternative" in Hebrew) (1973-1978) and the multi-issue New Jewish Agenda (1980-1992). Both failed due to lack of widespread popular support and funding. One of

the interesting results of the Oslo Peace Process, even though it eventually collapsed as a result of its own internal contradictions, is that it changed the way in which American Jews viewed the conflict. In recent years, particularly after the second *Intifada*, a number of American Jewish groups expressing alternative understandings of the conflict have begun to emerge on the Jewish political scene. These include the Washington-based Israel Policy Forum, Americans for Peace Now (the American wing of the Israeli peace group, Shalom Achshav / Peace Now), Ameinu (the American wing of the Labor Party, formerly known as the Labor Zionist Alliance), the New York-based MeretzUSA (the American wing of the Meretz party), the more radical San Francisco-based Jewish Voice for Peace, the Philadelphia-based Shalom Center, the New York-based student group Union of Progressive Zionists, and the Chicago-based grassroots group Brit Tzedek v' Shalom (the Jewish Alliance for Justice Peace).³⁰⁸ Except for the Jewish Voice for Peace, all of these groups are committed to resolving the conflict through a two-state solution. Combined, all of these groups remain small and limited in their scope and resources. They have not yet been able to exercise significant impact on the Jewish community. However, for the most part, they are working to challenge and redefine the Jewish community's norms from within rather than from without. They are gradually gaining limited traction within the Jewish community by offering an alternative voice for sympathetic members of Congress to listen to. For example, in 2006, a coalition-led of the Israel Policy Forum, Americans for Peace Now, and Brit Tzedek v' Shalom was able

³⁰⁸ It should be noted that the author is a co-founder and national board member of Brit Tzedek v' Shalom.

to play a small part in moderating the AIPAC-sponsored Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006, which was initially proposed as a response to Hamas's victory in the 2006 Palestinian Parliamentary elections.³⁰⁹ In 2007, these groups are on the verge of passing a resolution in the Senate by unanimous consent that would support the appointment of a U.S. Middle East peace envoy.³¹⁰

The key issue in building an alternative voice to AIPAC within the Jewish community remains lack of resources to pose a credible political alternative. The lack of resources of these organizations is due in large part to their inability so far to completely reframe the context of the conflict in a manner that is widely acceptable and highly engaging to the majority of American Jews and the majority of the American population who support the idea of a two-state solution that will preserve the safety and security of Israel. The frame of reference offered by these groups often makes it difficult for them to

³⁰⁹ The Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act was essentially prepared by AIPAC. Initially, it was passed overwhelming in the House. This bill was moderated in the Senate. At the end of the Congressional session, the House passed the more moderate Senate version which was then signed by President Bush. He attached a signing statement which further limited the bill's effect. Although these groups played a public role in moderating the bill, the opposition of State Department also played a significant role in convincing Congress to remove the more extreme sections of the legislation.

³¹⁰ S.Res.224. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. This resolution is sponsored by Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA). For full text see: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d110:SE00321>: These groups are also backing a similar bill in the US House of Representatives under the sponsorship of Rep. Susan Davis (D-CA). For full text see: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d110:h.res.00143>:

integrate their ideas within the cultural norms of the Jewish community since most of the leadership of these groups comes from radical secular activist culture outside the organized Jewish community and often has difficulty fully articulating and expressing their views about the conflict in language that is consistent with the norms and values of the broader Jewish community and the broader American cultural understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Even when the policy solutions that they offer, such as a two-state solution, are not particularly radical, they have a difficult time trying to sell their ideas to the Jewish community and the wealthy liberal Jewish donors, because the language and context that they adopt tends to be radical and disconnected from the mainstream culture. Instead of trying to challenge the mainstream cultural norms, which change slowly over generations, these groups need to find ways to reinterpret mainstream cultural norms in support of the policies that they advocate. This requires reclaiming terms such as “Zionism,” “pro-Israel,” “security,” “strategic interest,” “strengthening Israel” and contextualizing them to support the policies that they are advocating. If these groups are able to frame their policy objectives less in terms of justice for the Palestinians and abstract notions of peace and anti-militarism and more in terms of what will allow Israel to emerge as a safe, secure, democratic Jewish state that will be better positioned to advance American interests in the region, they may be able to begin to untie the Gordian knot that has thus far limited their ability to effectively establish a mainstream alternative to AIPAC.

Cultures are large amorphous constructions of historical ideas, images, and values and evolve gradually over decades. Given the construction of values and mythologies

about the state of Israel, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the Arab/Islamic world there is little likelihood that any activist groups will succeed by challenging the cultural norms that support the U.S.-Israel relationship. The security of Israel and safety of Jews are simply too deeply ingrained as goals that American public supports. However, that doesn't mean that there isn't the political space for the nature of the relationship to gradually evolve in different direction. The U.S.-Israel relationship has, in fact, survived and grown in large part because it has proved to be a remarkably flexible political construction. As currently constructed, the immense political influence of the Jewish community, the Christian right and the neo-Conservatives within the American political system, constricts the ability of the U.S. to use its influence as Israel's superpower patron to make Israel act in a manner that conforms to America's and Israel's strategic interest in a two-state solution. As Daniel Levy, a policy advisor to former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, has recently written, "The [pro-Israel] lobby denies Israel something many other countries benefit from -- the excuse of external encouragement to do things that are politically tricky, but nationally necessary."³¹¹

From this research, it is clear that the structure of the U.S.-Israel alliance as currently defined has prevented progress towards Middle East peace. However, given the

³¹¹ Levy, Daniel. "So pro-Israel that it hurts." International Herald Tribune. (April 4, 2006). Implicit in Levy's comment is a critique of the political paralysis within Israel's fractious coalition-based political system that suggests that takes responsibility off of Israel by suggesting that it would be almost impossible for Israel to move forward to make peace on its own without significant U.S. pressure. This may not be an entirely true. The Oslo Accords, for example, emerged from a backchannel between Israel and the Palestinians with little U.S. involvement after the stalemating of the official U.S.-

flexibility of the construct, it can be extrapolated that the U.S.-Israel alliance does not inherently preclude that the alliance from being reconstructed in a manner in which it will encourage progress towards a diplomatic solution. Thus those political actors seeking a more diplomatically engaged American policy in support of a two-state solution need to find a way to operate within the cultural paradigm of the U.S.-Israel alliance rather than attempting to undermine an alliance that is deeply culturally imbedded, has survived many serious challenges, and is unlikely to disappear anytime soon. Thus those who are seeking to bring about a two-state solution must find a ways to reinterpret the framework of the U.S.-Israel “special relationship” in order to convince the key interest groups, most particularly, American Jews, that the Israeli people -- not to mention the American people -- will be more secure if Israel pursues a two-state solution rather than a policy of continued military occupation. This requires encouraging American Jews to recognize that the long-term best interests of the Israeli people may not always be the policies advocated by AIPAC or even those advocated by particular Israeli governments.

The best way for the United States to be freed to use its leverage as Israel’s patron to achieve a two-state solution is for American Jews, and then thru them the American public at large, to reconsider the definition of what it means to take a “pro-Israel” position. Under the current definition of being “pro-Israel” the American Jewish community acts as the primary force that inhibits U.S. diplomatic engagement in favor of a two-state solution. However, if the meaning of being “pro-Israel” can be redefined

sponsored Washington-based negotiations. Nevertheless, while this issue hasn’t been explored in detail in this analysis, the author agrees with much of what Levy is implying.

within the American Jewish community and within the broader American culture context as a position that promotes an independently-defined best long-term security interests of the Israeli people rather than simply the goals of each specific politically-constrained Israeli coalition government than the American Jewish community can be empowered to act as a force within the American political system to promote, rather than constrain, active American engagement in favor of a two-state solution.

This research suggests that the cultural values and beliefs shared by both the American public and policymaking elites are established in a manner that is likely to lead to the continuation of the U.S.-Israel alliance for many decades to come. However, the nature of alliance and the relationship of the two states is likely to continue to evolve in response to events in ways that are extremely difficult to anticipate. In recent decades, the alliance has acted to constrain the ability of the United States to promote its oft-stated long-stated goal of a two-state solution that would, hopefully, lead to a more peaceful, more stable region. Thus those seeking to achieve a two-state solution should look for ways to redefine the nature of the commitment and the relationship between the parties in ways that can lead to more constructive and positive alliance that will ultimately be more mutually beneficial in the long-run for both parties. The 2008 election will bring a new Presidential administration to power which will be faced with immense challenges – including many self-inflicted wounds -- in the Middle East. The great difficulties that the U.S. now faces in the Middle East may well create new openings that seem to hold the potential for redefining the nature of the U.S.-Israel “special relationship” and, therefore, creating new opportunities for advancing the possibility of a two-state solution.

An Agenda for Further Research

This study has covered a lot of ground and opens up many promising areas for further research and study. Most directly, this has been a study of the importance of political culture as a crucial variable in shaping political outcomes. Unlike many earlier studies, it is designed to show the linkages between broad cultural changes and a narrow public policy issue. This study has attempted to address Laitin's previously cited critique by specifying in a more precise Gertzian fashion the relationship between the particular forms of cultural change and specific political outcomes.

Part of the process of culture change is that ideas and images are filtered through a variety of intervening cultural and political institutions which act as filtering devices. These intervening variables, in effect, become venues for interpreting and reproducing culture. One of the limitations of this study is that it was unable to explore in greater depth the role played by intervening institutions such as elementary and secondary schools, universities, think tanks, Hollywood films, museums, and the media. These are crucial links in the process of trying to understand how cultural images are continually transmitted and reinterpreted over time. This study has attempted to suggest that while cultural models produce considerable continuity that they also allow room for considerable, albeit, gradual change as cultural images are redefined over time. How and under what conditions the process of reinterpreting culture occurs, both in this policy area and any number of other policy areas, offers a rich research agenda. The amount of

material available, particularly in the realm of English language media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, is vast, but well-worth exploring. An interesting side project would be to consider the role of particular key events in shaping media coverage. For example, a systematic examination of the repercussions of Ariel Sharon's partially successful libel suit against Time Magazine -- over its coverage of his role in Sabra and Shatila massacres -- had in shaping media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict could yield some fascinating results in terms of understanding how the media covers the conflict and the conditions that affect its interpretative role.

There is also a lot of work to be done in better understanding how the mass public and public opinion affect decision-making elites. In examining the actions of policymakers and the influences on them, it has been possible to begin to gain a better understanding of how decision-makers interpret and process political images and ideas. This allows us to begin to gain a better understanding of the role which intermediary political institutions (lobbies, political parties, financial contributors, PACs) play in interpreting the images and ideas and transmitting them to policymakers.

This is also a study of political development of the United States which is often categorized as distinctive and exceptional as compared to other industrialized countries. It explores some of the nuances of the debate on American exceptionalism. American democracy has long been regarded as exceptional when compared to European models. Some of the interrelated exceptional aspects of the American experience that are often cited are the lack of feudal past, the lack of a socialist movement, and the higher level of

religiosity in American society. Unlike in many other developed countries, American policymakers often appear to have placed more emphasis on cultural factors that go beyond the realist paradigm. This study examined the cultural elements that American policymakers have incorporated into their definition of the “national interest.”³¹² So the question becomes: Do American policymaking elites approach the process of defining the national interest differently than policymaking elites in other advanced industrial democracies. While this sort analysis would require far more extensive comparative work than has been attempted here, the preliminary conclusion from examining the American case is strongly suggestive of a pattern in which cultural and moral concerns influence U.S. policy towards Israel in ways that don’t seem to have obvious parallels in other Western democracies. This study could easily be used as the basis for further study of why such a unique “special relationship” between Israel and the U.S. has developed, but other industrialized democracies such as Canada, Great Britain, Germany, France, and Italy have not developed the same kind close alliances with Israel. A preliminary hypothesis of such a comparative study might propose that the major difference is that in the U.S. religion and religious values have a much stronger cultural resonance in politics whereas most other industrialized states have developed more strictly secular polities. Anthony Rusonik, for example, argues that there is “no doubt [that] American exceptionalism makes...sympathy an operative value... [since] no other country allows

³¹² Another striking example of this phenomenon is America’s continued economic boycott of Cuba against its own apparent economic interests. Here again, a powerful lobby, the Cuban-American Foundation, appears to play a significant role in shaping American policy. This study may well shed some light on the cultural elements of the U.S.-Cuba relationship.

purely moral concerns to take precedence over security interests in conduct of its foreign relations.”³¹³

This study, in line with the arguments of Huntington and Shain above, suggests that the making of foreign policy is being domesticated and that the processes for making foreign and domestic policy are more similar than has often been presumed. Thus this study reopens many complex questions about to degree to which foreign policy is shaped by domestic concerns as opposed to strategic interests. Perhaps, more importantly, it opens a discussion about the degree to which strategic interests are defined by the real threats and opportunities abroad and to what extent they are defined by cultural constraints at home. In other words, to what degree are strategic interests defined by objective conditions and to what degree are they shaped by more subjective cultural forces?

Along the same lines, it also examines the increasingly important role that Diaspora communities play in shaping the foreign policy of their host countries towards their original home countries. Perhaps in a world of instantaneous communications, where sovereignty is becoming more nebulous, distinctions between domestic and foreign policy are becoming more ambiguous. Indeed, perhaps, the differences between decision-making elites and the mass public (or at least the politically active public) have also become smaller and less significant.

³¹³ Rusonik, Anthony. “On the West Bank of the Potomac: Debating the Sources of US Support for Israel.” The Jerusalem Journal of International Relations. (Vol. 12, No. 4, 1990): 52.

This study also opens the door to a future research agenda on the “special relationship” between Israel and the United States. Many of the political polemics on this subject have argued that the relationship is either deteriorating or strengthening -- depending on the political perspective of the author. This study has raised the question as to the permanence of a relationship built on cultural foundations. One of the criticisms that have often been launched at cultural arguments is that they can not explain political change. And yet, the cultural case study above suggests that the images and elements within a culture constantly evolving -- albeit often slowly and over extended periods of time. While cultures change relatively slowly, they are constantly being reinterpreted and redefined in new circumstances. The “special relationship” that has been discussed above has already gone through a series of transformations. Does that mean that it is likely to continue to transform in a way that continues to support a strong U.S.-Israel alliance or is it likely to dissolve over time? If history is any guide, the U.S.-Israel alliance is likely to continue for some time, but the nature and content of that relationship seems likely to evolve.

And finally, on a more abstract level, this study is an examination of the manner in which humans manipulate their own reality. In politics, as in other areas of human interaction, the perception of reality often matters more than the actual facts. Political reality is not the sum total of all the known facts, but rather a construction of the human imagination. Reality is almost inevitably a construction in which facts are selectively filtered through lenses of the human mind. This is a study of how those lenses have been applied to the U.S.-Israel “special relationship.” If American foreign policy is ever to

serve the cause of regional peace, the lenses on America's glasses may have to be adjusted. Therefore, this study is an attempt to determine how the lens of political culture filters perceptions of political reality in the making of foreign policy in the Middle East. Only by bettering our understanding of how humans perceive reality is it possible to reduce the gap between perception and reality. The American view of the Middle East is an arena where this gap is particularly wide and the consequences of such a gap have often been particularly dire. If this project can in some small way, contribute to the narrowing of that gap, than perhaps it will increase the chance of achieving peace in the Middle East.

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Appendix A: U.S. Assistance to Israel, FY1949-FY2005
(In Millions of Dollars)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Adjusted Totals</u>	<u>Inflation- adjustment</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Military Grant</u>	<u>Military Loan</u>	<u>Econ Grant</u>	<u>All Other Aid</u>
1949	\$863.0	\$8.63	\$100.0				\$100.0
1950	\$0.0	\$8.53	\$0.0				
1951	\$277.3	\$7.90	\$35.1			\$0.1	\$35.0
1952	\$669.6	\$7.75	\$86.4			\$63.7	\$22.7
1953	\$566.7	\$7.70	\$73.6			\$73.6	
1954	\$570.7	\$7.64	\$74.7			\$54.0	\$20.7
1955	\$404.2	\$7.67	\$52.7			\$21.5	\$31.2
1956	\$384.0	\$7.56	\$50.8			\$14.0	\$36.8
1957	\$299.0	\$7.31	\$40.9			\$16.8	\$24.1
1958	\$607.2	\$7.11	\$85.4			\$9.0	\$76.4
1959	\$376.3	\$7.06	\$53.3		\$0.4	\$9.2	\$43.7
1960	\$390.0	\$6.94	\$56.2		\$0.5	\$8.9	\$46.8
1961	\$535.2	\$6.87	\$77.9			\$8.5	\$69.4
1962	\$635.1	\$6.80	\$93.4		\$13.2	\$0.4	\$79.8
1963	\$590.7	\$6.72	\$87.9		\$13.3		\$74.6
1964	\$245.3	\$6.63	\$37.0				\$37.0
1965	\$424.5	\$6.52	\$65.1		\$12.9		\$52.2
1966	\$803.9	\$6.34	\$126.8		\$90.0		\$36.8
1967	\$145.8	\$6.15	\$23.7		\$7.0		\$16.7
1968	\$629.4	\$5.91	\$106.5		\$25.0		\$81.5
1969	\$897.7	\$5.60	\$160.3		\$85.0		\$75.3
1970	\$497.1	\$5.30	\$93.8		\$30.0		\$63.8
1971	\$3,215.9	\$5.07	\$634.3		\$545.0		\$89.3
1972	\$2,120.0	\$4.92	\$430.9		\$300.0	\$50.0	\$80.9
1973	\$2,281.7	\$4.63	\$492.8		\$307.5	\$50.0	\$135.3
1974	\$10,930.8	\$4.17	\$2,621.3	\$1,500.0	\$982.7	\$50.0	\$88.6
1975	\$2,972.0	\$3.82	\$778.0	\$100.0	\$200.0	\$344.5	\$133.5
1976	\$8,439.1	\$3.61	\$2,337.7	\$750.0	\$750.0	\$475.0	\$362.7
TQ	\$1,055.9	\$3.61	\$292.5	\$100.0	\$100.0	\$50.0	\$42.5
1977	\$5,974.9	\$3.39	\$1,762.5	\$500.0	\$500.0	\$490.0	\$272.5
1978	\$5,741.2	\$3.15	\$1,822.6	\$500.0	\$500.0	\$525.0	\$297.6
1979	\$13,833.0	\$2.83	\$4,888.0	\$1,300.0	\$2,700.0	\$525.0	\$363.0
1980	\$5,281.3	\$2.49	\$2,121.0	\$500.0	\$500.0	\$525.0	\$596.0
1981	\$5,454.3	\$2.26	\$2,413.4	\$500.0	\$900.0	\$764.0	\$249.4
1982	\$4,793.6	\$2.13	\$2,250.5	\$550.0	\$850.0	\$806.0	\$44.5
1983	\$5,161.5	\$2.06	\$2,505.6	\$750.0	\$950.0	\$785.0	\$20.6
1984	\$5,210.6	\$1.98	\$2,631.6	\$850.0	\$850.0	\$910.0	\$21.6
1985	\$6,449.5	\$1.91	\$3,376.7	\$1,400.0		\$1,950.0	\$26.7
1986	\$6,887.4	\$1.88	\$3,663.5	\$1,722.6		\$1,898.4	\$42.5

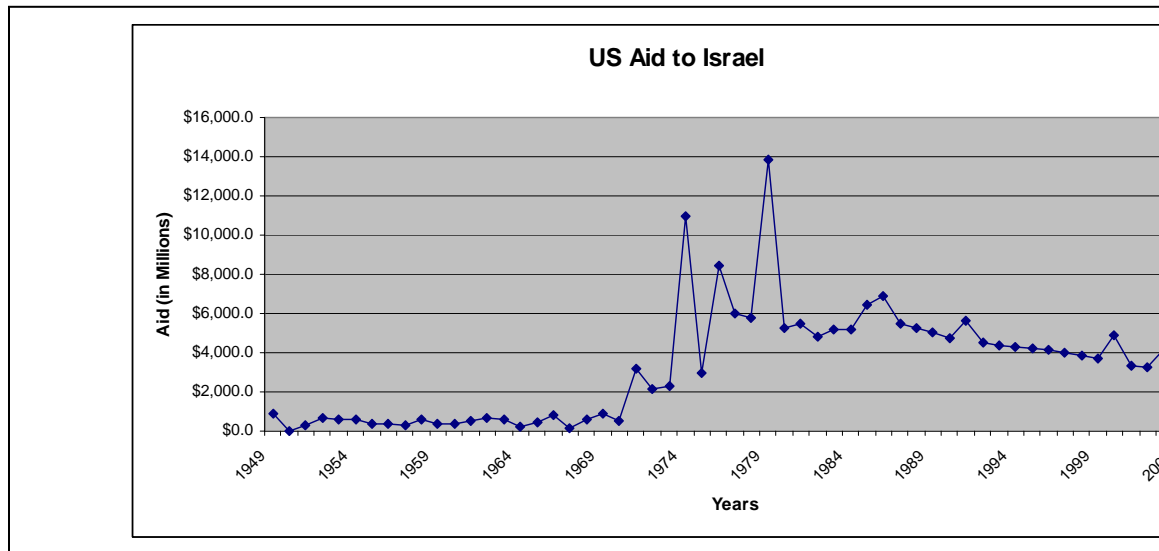
<u>Year</u>	<u>Adjusted Totals</u>	<u>Inflation- adjustment</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Military Grant</u>	<u>Military Loan</u>	<u>Economi c Grant</u>	<u>All Other Aid</u>
1987	\$5,502.8	\$1.81	\$3,040.2	\$1,800.0		\$1,200.0	\$40.2
1988	\$5,295.5	\$1.74	\$3,043.4	\$1,800.0		\$1,200.0	\$43.4
1989	\$5,055.7	\$1.66	\$3,045.6	\$1,800.0		\$1,200.0	\$45.6
1990	\$4,764.8	\$1.57	\$3,034.9	\$1,792.3		\$1,194.8	\$47.8
1991	\$5,605.6	\$1.51	\$3,712.3	\$1,800.0		\$1,850.0	\$62.3
1997	\$4,009.1	\$1.28	\$3,132.1	\$1,800.0		\$1,200.0	\$132.1
1998	\$3,880.8	\$1.26	\$3,080.0	\$1,800.0		\$1,200.0	\$80.0
1999	\$3,702.3	\$1.23	\$3,010.0	\$1,860.0		\$1,080.0	\$70.0
2000	\$4,916.9	\$1.19	\$4,129.1	\$3,120.0		\$949.1	\$60.0
2001	\$3,336.3	\$1.16	\$2,876.1	\$1,975.6		\$838.2	\$62.3
2002	\$3,249.7	\$1.14	\$2,848.0	\$2,040.0		\$720.0	\$88.0
2003	\$4,194.6	\$1.12	\$3,741.1	\$3,086.4		\$596.1	\$58.6
2004	\$2,929.1	\$1.09	\$2,687.3	\$2,147.3		\$477.2	\$62.8
2005	\$2,742.8	\$1.05	\$2,612.2	\$2,202.2		\$357.0	\$53.0
2006		\$1.02					
Total	\$187,346.0		\$96,153.1	\$49,046.4	\$11,212.5	\$30,540.0	\$5,354.2

Source: Jeremy Sharp, "U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel," Congressional Research Service, Updated January 5, 2006

<http://digital.library.unt.edu/govdocs/crs/permalink/meta-crs-8124:1>

Inflation Adjustment based on Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis to 2007 dollars

<http://woodrow.mpls.frb.fed.us/Research/data/us/calc/index.cfm>



Appendix B: U.S. Public Opinion Data on Israel

General Feelings towards Israel

<u>Date</u>	<u>Favorable, pro-Israel</u>	<u>Unfavorable, anti-Israel</u>	<u>Neutral</u>
1957	94	5	
1972	91	9	
1981	96	4	
1981	93	1	6
1982	88	1	11
1983	91	3	6

Feeling a Personal Sense of Loss If Israel were Destroyed

<u>Date</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>
1957	90	10	
1975	94	6	
1981	83	13	5
1982	83	9	8
1983	77	10	13

Source: Gilboa, Eytan. American Public Opinion toward Israel and the Arab-Israeli Conflict. (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books / D.C. Heath Company, 1987): 242.

Sympathy for Israel and the Palestinians

	<u>Israel</u>	<u>Palestinians</u>	<u>Both</u>	<u>Neither</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
2001	47	19	8	18	17
2003	41	13	8	18	20
2004	40	13	7	18	22
2005	37	12	5	19	27
2006	44	9	5	20	22

And Pew Center for People and the Press.

<http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=281>

American Sympathy Toward Israel and the Arabs/Palestinians

The following are results of the most consistently asked question regarding American public attitudes toward the Middle East: "In the Middle East situation, are your sympathies more with Israel or with the Arab nations?"

Month	Year	Pollster	Israel	Arabs
June	1948	NORC	34	12
October	1948	NORC	33	11
March	1949	NORC	32	13
June 2-7	1967	Gallup	38	3
June	1967	Gallup	56	4
June	1967	Harris	41	1
Jan.	1969	Gallup	50	5
Jan. 23-28	1969	Gallup	44	5
Feb.	1969	Gallup	41	4
Feb.	1970	Gallup	44	3
March	1970	Gallup	38	3
Oct.	1970	Harris	47	6
June	1971	Harris	46	7
July	1971	Harris	44	7
Oct. 2-7	1973	Gallup	38	3
Oct. 5-8	1973	Gallup	47	6
Oct. 16	1973	Gallup	44	5
Oct. 19-22	1973	Gallup	48	6
Oct.	1973	Harris	39	4
Nov.	1973	Roper	48	7
Dec. 4	1973	Gallup	48	7
Dec. 7-10	1973	Gallup	54	8
Dec.	1973	Gallup	50	7
Jan.	1974	Gallup	38	6

Oct.	1974	Yankelovich	55	9
Jan.	1975	Gallup	44	8
Jan.	1975	Harris	33	14*
Apr.	1975	Gallup	37	8
Apr.	1975	Roper	43	7
Jan.	1976	Harris	52	6
Jan.	1976	Harris	40	10*
Jan.	1976	Yankelovich	56	9
Mar.	1977	Roper	43	5
June	1977	Gallup	44	8
Nov.	1977	Gallup	46	11
Dec.	1977	Gallup	37	8
Jan.	1977	Roper	47	6
Jan.	1978	Roper	37	10
Mar.	1978	Gallup	44	11
Apr.	1978	Gallup	38	11
May	1978	Roper	35	9
Aug.	1978	Gallup	42	11
Nov.	1978	Gallup	41	13*
Mar.	1979	Roper	36	9
Apr.	1979	Yankelovich	47	11
Oct.	1979	Los Angeles Times	49	11
Dec.	1979	Yankelovich	49	6
Dec.	1979	Yankelovich	49	15*
Jan.	1979	Gallup	40	14
Mar.	1979	Gallup	34	11
Nov.	1979	Gallup	40	14
Mar.	1980	Roper	37	10
July	1980	Harris	52	12
July	1980	Harris	47	14*
Oct.	1980	Gallup	45	13
July-Aug.	1981	Gallup	44	11
July	1981	Roper	35	10
Aug.	1981	Harris	47	15*

Nov.	1981	Gallup	49	12
Jan.	1982	Gallup	49	14
Mar.	1982	Washington Post/ABC	55	18
May	1982	Gallup	51	12
June	1982	Gallup	52	10
June	1982	Roper	39	9
Jul.	1982	Los Angeles Times	48	17
Jul.	1982	Gallup	52	10
Aug.	1982	Gallup	41	12
Aug.	1982	Washington Post/ABC	52	18
Sep.	1982	Roper	40	12
Sep.	1982	Gallup	32	28
Oct.	1982	Roper	38	14
Oct.	1982	Gallup	40	17*
Jan.	1983	Gallup	49	12
Jan.	1983	Washington Post/ABC	47	17
Feb.-Mar.	1983	Washington Post/ABC	52	16
Mar.	1983	Gallup	49	12
July	1983	Roper	37	9
Jan.	1983	Gallup	49	12
Jan.	1984	Roper	44	8
Mar.	1984	Roper	39	8
July	1985	Washington Post/ABC	49	11
Oct.	1985	Harris	64	14
Apr.	1985	Roper	42	10
May	1986	Gallup	43	20*
June	1986	Roper	53	8
Feb.	1987	Harris	58	8
March	1987	Roper	48	8
Apr.	1987	AJC	50	14*
Jan.	1988	Penn & Schoen	47	14
Apr.	1988	AJC	61	13
Apr.	1988	AJC	55	23*
Apr.	1988	Los Angeles Times	51	12

Apr.	1988	Los Angeles Times	37	25*
Apr.	1988	Chicago Tribune	42	27*
Apr.	1988	Roper	37	11
May	1988	ADL	44	13
May	1988	Gallup	37	15*
Dec.	1988	Gallup	46	24*
Apr.	1989	Washington Post/ABC	69	16
Apr.	1989	Roper	34	14*
June	1989	Roper	36	13
Aug.	1989	Gallup	50	14*
Sept.	1989	Marttila & Kiley	53	14
Sept.	1989	Marttila & Kiley	42	30*
Mar.	1990	Harris	52	18
May	1990	AJC (Roper)	39	9
May	1990	Roper	34	15*
June	1990	New York Times/CBS	40	19
Oct.	1990	Gallup	48	23*
Dec.	1990	Marttila & Kiley	48	20
Jan.	1991	Gallup	64	8
March	1991	New York Times/CBS	49	20
March	1991	Gallup	60	17*
Sept.	1993	Gallup	42	15*
Nov.	1996	Gallup	38	15*
Aug.	1997	Gallup	38	8*
	1997	New York Times/CBS	48	13*
April	1998	New York Times/CBS	58	13*
Dec.	1998	Gallup	46	13*
July	1999	Gallup	43	14*
Jan.	2000	Gallup	43	13*
July	2000	Gallup	41	12*
Oct.	2000	Gallup	41	11*

Feb.	2001	Gallup	51	16*
Aug	2001	Gallup	41	13*
Sept.	2001	Gallup	55	7*
Dec.	2001	Gallup	51	14*
Feb.	2002	Gallup	55	14*
March	2002	Gallup	43	14*
April	2002	Gallup	50	15*
April 22-24	2002	Gallup	47	13*
May	2002	Gallup	49	15*
June	2002	Gallup	49	14*
Sept.	2002	Gallup	47	14*
Feb.	2003	Gallup	58	13*
May	2003	Gallup	46	16*
May 8	2003	Israel Project+	46	7*
May 29	2003	Israel Project+	42	8*
July	2003	Israel Project+	48	10*
Aug	2003	Israel Project+	42	6*
Nov	2003	Israel Project+	47	11*
Dec	2003	ADL	40	15*
Jan.	2004	Israel Project+	52	10*
Feb.	2004	Gallup	55	18*
March 17	2004	Israel Project+	52	8*
March 23	2004	Israel Project+	48	8*
May	2004	Pew	46	12*
July	2004	Israel Project+	47	9*

Sept.	2004	Israel Project+	48	6*
Nov.	2004	Israel Project+	49	10*
Jan.	2005	Israel Project+	39	6*
Feb.	2005	Israel Project+	40	10*
Feb.	2005	Gallup	52	18*
March 18-25	2005	ADL	42	13*
March 18-25	2005	ADL	44	9
Aug.	2005	Israel Project+	38	8*
Oct.	2005	Israel Project+	46	10*
Jan.	2006	Israel Project+	45	7*
Feb.	2006	Gallup	59	15*
Mar-May	2006	Pew	48	13*
May	2006	Israel Project+	52	6*
July 2	2006	Israel Project+	45	6*
July 16-18	2006	Israel Project+	60	7*
July 20	2006	Israel Project+	57	8*
July 27	2006	Israel Project+	58	6*
Aug.	2006	Israel Project+	56	7*
Sept.	2006	Israel Project+	53	5*
Nov.	2006	Israel Project+	54	6*
Jan.	2007	Israel Project+	50	7*
Feb.	2007	Gallup	58	20*
Average for 172 polls			46	11

*Palestinian Arabs

+Question wording slightly different: Thinking about the ongoing conflict between Israel

and the Palestinians in the Middle East, please tell me whether, in general, you consider yourself to be a strong supporter of Israel, a supporter of Israel, a supporter of the Palestinians or a strong supporter of the Palestinians.

BY ADMINISTRATION

	Number of Polls	Israel	Arabs/Palestinians
Truman	3	33.00	12.00
Johnson	3	45.00	2.67
Nixon/Ford	28	44.75	6.39
Carter	23	42.57	10.57
Reagan	43	46.37	13.56
Bush	15	47.87	16.67
Clinton	10	43.80	12.70
George W. Bush	47	48.94	10.70

Source: Jewish Virtual Library, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/US-Israel/polls.html>

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Gallup Polls on American Sympathy Toward Israel and the Arabs/Palestinians

Gallup Poll results of the most consistently asked question regarding American public attitudes toward the Middle East: "In the Middle East situation, are your sympathies more with Israel or with the Arab nations?"

Month	Year	Israel	Arabs
June 2-7	1967	38	3
June	1967	56	4
Jan.	1969	50	5
Jan. 23-28	1969	44	5
Feb.	1969	41	4
Feb.	1970	44	3
March	1970	38	3
Oct. 2-7	1973	38	3
Oct. 5-8	1973	47	6
Oct. 16	1973	44	5
Oct. 19-22	1973	48	6
Dec. 4	1973	48	7
Dec. 7-10	1973	54	8
Dec.	1973	48	7
Jan.	1974	38	6
Jan.	1975	44	8
Apr.	1975	37	8
June	1977	44	8
Nov.	1977	46	11
Dec.	1977	37	8
Feb.	1978	33	14
Mar.	1978	38	11
Apr.	1978	38	22

May	1978	44	10
Aug.	1978	42	11
Sep.	1978	41	12
Sep.	1978	42	12
Nov.	1978	41	13
Jan.	1979	40	14
Mar.	1979	34	11
Nov.	1979	40	14
Oct.	1980	45	13
Aug.	1981	44	11
Nov.	1981	49	12
Jan.	1982	49	14
May	1982	51	12
June	1982	52	10
Jul.	1982	52	10
Aug.	1982	41	12
Sep.	1982	32	28
Oct.	1982	40	17
Jan.	1983	49	12
Mar.	1983	49	12
Jan.	1983	49	12
May	1986	43	20
May	1988	37	15*
Dec.	1988	46	24
Aug.	1989	50	14
Oct.	1990	48	23
Jan.	1991	64	8
Feb.	1991	64	7
March	1991	60	17
Aug.	1991	59	21
Sept.	1993	42	15*
Nov.	1996	38	15*

Aug.	1997	38	8*
Dec.	1998	46	13*
July	1999	43	14*
Jan.	2000	43	13*
July	2000	41	12*
Oct.	2000	41	11*
Feb.	2001	51	16*
Aug.	2001	41	13*
Sept.	2001	55	7*
Dec.	2001	51	14*
Feb.	2002	55	14*
March	2002	43	14*
April	2002	50	15*
April 22-24	2002	47	13*
May	2002	49	15*
June	2002	49	14*
Sept.	2002	47	14*
Feb.	2003	58	13*
May	2003	46	16*
Feb.	2004	55	18*
Feb.	2005	52	18*
Feb.	2006	59	15*
Feb.	2007	58	20*

Avg. All Polls	46.00	12.00
All Polls After 67 War	46.10	12.12
Avg. 2000-	49.55	14.25
Avg. 90s	50.20	14.10
Avg. 80s	45.76	14.59
Avg. 70s	41.85	9.27
Avg. Post-Oslo (9/93)	48.17	13.96

BY ADMINISTRATION

	Number of Polls	Israel	Arabs/Palestinians
Johnson	2	47.00	3.50
Nixon/Ford	15	44.20	5.60
Carter	15	40.33	12.27
Reagan	15	45.53	14.73
Bush	6	57.50	15.00
Clinton	8	41.50	12.63
George W. Bush	17	50.94	14.65

*Question asked about Palestinian Arabs

Source: Jewish Virtual Library, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/US-Israel/gallup.html>, Compiled by Mitchell Bard, Copyrighted 2007, American-Israeli Cooperative Institute

Appendix C: Contributions by Pro-Israel PACs by Election Cycle

Electoral Cycle	PAC Contributions	Contributions in 2007 Inflation Adjusted Dollars	Inflation Adjustment	Number of PACs
1975-1976	\$2,450	\$8,844.50	\$3.61	1
1977-1978	\$43,475	\$136,946.25	\$3.15	3
1979-1980	\$414,400	\$1,031,856.00	\$2.49	10
1980-1982	\$2,027,200	\$4,317,936.00	\$2.13	40
1983-1984	\$3,772,994	\$7,470,528.12	\$1.98	81
1985-1986	\$4,609,984	\$8,666,769.92	\$1.88	94
1987-1988	\$5,432,055	\$9,451,775.70	\$1.74	78
1988-1990	\$4,948,934	\$7,769,826.38	\$1.57	95
1991-1992	\$3,963,007	\$5,785,990.22	\$1.46	76
1993-1994	\$2,529,573	\$3,516,106.47	\$1.39	61
1995-1996	\$2,738,647	\$3,587,627.57	\$1.31	61
1997-1998	\$2,102,906	\$2,649,661.56	\$1.26	36
1999-2000	\$1,889,904	\$2,248,985.76	\$1.19	35
2001-2002	\$2,727,689	\$3,109,565.46	\$1.14	37
2002-2004	\$3,142,994	\$3,425,863.46	\$1.09	36
<u>2004-2006</u>	<u>\$3,031,793</u>	<u>\$3,092,428.86</u>	<u>\$1.02</u>	<u>35</u>
	\$43,378,005	\$66,270,712.23		

Sources: Based on figures from the Federal Election Commission and the Center for Responsive Politics (<http://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/industry.asp?txt=Q05&cycle=2006>) and Curtiss, Richard H. Stealth PACs: Lobbying Congress for Control of U.S. Middle East Policy. (Washington, DC: American Education Trust, 1996): 254, Washington Report for Middle East Affairs (April/May, 1997): 50 and Washington Report for Middle East Affairs (July/August, 1998): 24

**Appendix D – Largest Recipients of Pro-Israel PAC Donations in 2006 Senate and House
Election Cycle**

Senator	Pro-Israel PAC Donations
Lieberman, Joe II-CT)	\$156,593.00
Stabenow, Debbie (D-MI)	\$95,796.00
Nelson, Bill (D-FL)	\$94,861.00
Kyl, Jon (R-AZ)	\$88,000.00
Menendez, Bob (D-NJ)	\$87,335.00
Talent, Jim (R-MO)	\$75,510.00
Whitehouse, Sheldon (D-RI)	\$75,500.00
Santorum, Rick (R-PA)	\$75,000.00
Nelson, Ben (D-NE)	\$71,500.00
DeWine, Mike (R-OH)	\$70,000.00
Conrad, Kent (D-ND)	\$68,600.00
Cardin, Ben (D-MD)	\$64,565.00
Burns, Conrad (R-MT)	\$46,000.00
Klobuchar, Amy (D-MN)	\$37,835.00
Allen, George (R-VA)	\$36,500.00
Clinton, Hilary (D-NY)	\$35,618.00
Feinstein, Dianne (D-CA)	\$33,500.00
Ford, Harold Jr. (D-TN)	\$30,576.00
Ensign, John (R-NV)	\$30,000.00
Akaka, Daniel (D-HI)	\$29,500.00
Kennedy, Edward (D-MA)	\$28,000.00
Lugar, Dick (R-IN)	\$27,250.00
Brown, Sherrod (D-OH)	\$26,000.00
Carper, Tom (D-DE)	\$25,100.00
Laffey, Steve (R-RI)	\$24,750.00
Snowe, Olympia (R-ME)	\$18,500.00
Lott, Trent (R-MS)	\$15,500.00
Casey, Bob (D-PA)	\$15,000.00
McCaskill, Claire (D-MO)	\$14,335.00
Kennedy, Mark (R-MN)	\$13,500.00
Bingaman, Jeff (D-NM)	\$11,000.00
Thomas, Craig (R-WY)	\$11,000.00
Baucus, Max (D-MT)	\$10,300.00
Tester, Jon (D-MT)	\$10,224.00
Allard, Wayne (R-CO)	\$10,000.00
Martinez, Mel (R-FL)	\$10,000.00

Representatives	Pro-Israel PAC Donations
Kirk, Mark (R-IL)	\$75,064.00
Ellsworth, Brad (D-IN)	\$48,250.00
Hoyer, Steny (D-MN)	\$48,000.00
Berkley, Shelley (D-NV)	\$44,250.00
Hastert, Dennis (R-IL)	\$40,700.00
Engel, Elliot (D-NY)	\$40,500.00
Cantor, Eric (R-VA)	\$40,500.00
Ros-Lehtinen, Ileana (R-FL)	\$36,500.00
Ember, Reichgott Junge (D-MN)	\$29,500.00
Shaw, E. Clay Jr. (R-FL)	\$28,505.00
McHenry, Patrick (R-NC)	\$27,500.00
Johnson, Hank (D-GA)	\$27,200.00
Pryce, Deborah (R-OH)	\$26,000.00
Bean, Melissa (D-IL)	\$24,279.00
Crowley, Joseph (D-NY)	\$24,000.00
DeLay, Tom (R-TX)	\$23,500.00
Pelosi, Nancy (D-CA)	\$23,350.00
Shays, Christopher (R-CT)	\$21,500.00
Edwards, Chet (D-TX)	\$20,600.00
Schiff, Adam (D-CA)	\$20,000.00
Rothman, Steven (D-NJ)	\$18,000.00
Spratt, John Jr. (D-SC)	\$17,500.00
Barrow, John (D-GA)	\$16,824.00
Burton, Dan (R-IN)	\$15,000.00
Wilson, Heather (R-NM)	\$14,500.00
Pence, Mike (R-IN)	\$14,000.00
Kline, John (R-MN)	\$12,500.00
Garrett, Scott (R-NJ)	\$12,500.00
McCaul, Mike (R-TX)	\$12,000.00
Melancon, Charles (D-LA)	\$11,600.00
Salazar, John (D-CO)	\$11,100.00
Lantos, Tom (D-CA)	\$11,000.00
Sherman, Brad (D-CA)	\$10,600.00
Simmons, Rob (R-CT)	\$10,500.00
Sherwood, Don (R-PA)	\$10,500.00
Weldon, Curt (R-PA)	\$10,000.00
Harman, Jane (D-CA)	\$10,000.00

Jewish members are highlighted in Yellow.

Source: Compiled by the Author based on Data from the Center for Responsive Politics.

Appendix E: Jewish Vote in Presidential Elections, 1916-2004

<u>Year</u>	<u>Democratic Candidate</u>	<u>Republican Candidate</u>	<u>Independent Candidate</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Independents</u>
1916	Woodrow Wilson	Charles E. Hughes		55	45	
1920	James Cox	Warren Harding	Eugene V. Debs	19	43	27
1924	John Davis	Calvin Coolidge	R. La Follette	51	27	22
1928	Al Smith	Herbert Hoover		72	28	
1932	Franklin Roosevelt	Herbert Hoover		82	18	
1936	Franklin Roosevelt	Alf Landon		85	15	
1940	Franklin Roosevelt	Wendell Willkie		90	10	
1944	Franklin Roosevelt	Thomas Dewey		90	10	
1948	Harry Truman	Thomas Dewey	H. Wallace	75	10	15
1952	Adlai Stevenson	Dwight Eisenhower		64	36	
1956	Adlai Stevenson	Dwight Eisenhower		60	40	
1960	John Kennedy	Richard Nixon		82	18	
1964	Lyndon Johnson	Barry Goldwater		90	10	
1968	Hubert Humphrey	Richard Nixon	George Wallace	81	17	2
1972	George McGovern	Richard Nixon		64	34	
1976	Jimmy Carter	Gerald Ford		64	34	
1980	Jimmy Carter	Ronald Reagan		45	39	15
1984	Walter Mondale	Ronald Reagan		67	31	
1988	Michael Dukakis	George H.W. Bush		64	35	
1992	Bill Clinton	George H.W. Bush	Ross Perot	80	11	9
1996	Bill Clinton	Bob Dole	Ross Perot	78	16	3
2000	Al Gore	George W. Bush	Ralph Nader	79	19	1
2004	John Kerry	George W. Bush		74	25	
Average				70.0	24.8	
Average, New Deal (1932-44)				86.8	13.3	
Average since New Deal (1932-2000)				74.4	22.5	
Average, Post-War (1948-2000)				70.9	25.0	
Average since Nixon (1968-2000)				69.1	26.2	
Average since Reagan (1980-2004)				69.6	25.1	

Compiled by the Author

**Appendix F - Excerpts from the Republican and Democratic
Platforms on Israel and Jews**

(Most Important phrases are boldfaced below)

1944

D (Franklin Roosevelt) –

“We favor the opening of Palestine to unrestricted Jewish immigration and colonization, and such a policy as to result in **the establishment there of a free and democratic Jewish commonwealth.**”

R - (Wendell Willkie)

“In order to give refuge to millions of distressed Jewish men, women, and children driven from their homes by tyranny, we call for the opening of Palestine to their unrestricted immigration and land ownership, so that in accordance with the full intent and purpose of the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and the Resolution of a Republican Congress in 1922, Palestine may be constituted as **a free and democratic Commonwealth.** We condemn the failure of the President [Franklin Roosevelt] to insist that the mandatory of Palestine [Great Britain] carry out the provision of the Balfour Declaration and of the mandate while he pretends to support them.”

1948

D (Harry Truman) –

“President Truman, by granting immediate recognition to Israel, led the world in extending friendship and welcome to a people who have long sought and justly deserve freedom and independence.

We pledge full recognition to the State of Israel. We affirm our pride that the US under the leadership of President Truman played a leading role in the adoption of the resolution of November 29, 1947, by the UNGA for the creation of a Jewish State.

We approve the claims of the State of Israel to the boundaries set forth in the UN resolution of November 29th and consider that modification thereof should be made only if fully acceptable to the State of Israel.

We look forward to the admission of the State of Israel to the UN and its full participation in the international community of nations. **We pledge appropriate aid to the State of Israel in developing its economy and resources.**

We favor the revision of the arms embargo to accord to the State of Israel the right of self-defense. We pledge ourselves to work for modification of any resolution of the United Nations to the extent that it may prevent any such revision.

We continue to support, within the framework of the United Nations, the internationalization of Jerusalem and the protection of the Holy Places in Palestine.”

R (Thomas Dewey) –

“We welcome Israel into the family of nations and take pride in the fact that the Republican Party was the first to call for the establishment of a free and independent Jewish Commonwealth. The vacillation of the Democratic [Truman] Administration on this question has undermined the prestige of the United Nations. Subject to the letter and the spirit of the United Nations Charter, **we pledge to Israel full recognition, with its boundaries as sanctioned by the United Nations and aid in developing its economy.**”

1952 - D (Adlai Stevenson) –

“**We pledge continued assistance to Israel so that she may fulfill her humanitarian mission of providing shelter and sanctuary for her homeless Jewish refugees while strengthening her economic development.** We will continue to support the tripartite declaration of May 1950, to encourage Israel and the Arab States to settle their differences by direct negotiation, **to maintain and protect the sanctity of the Holy Places and to permit free access to them.**

We pledge aid the Arab States to enable them to develop their economic resources and raise the living standards of their people. **We support measures for the relief and reintegration of the Palestine refugees, and we pledge continued assistance to the reintegration program voted by the UNGA in January 1952.**”

R (Dwight Eisenhower) –

“The Republican Party has consistently advocated a national home for the Jewish since a Republican Congress declared its support of that objective thirty years ago.

In providing a sanctuary for Jewish people rendered homeless by persecution, the State of Israel appeals to our deepest humanitarian instincts. We shall continue our friendly interest in this constructive and inspiring undertaking.

We shall put our influence at the service of peace between Israel and the Arab States and we shall cooperate to bring economic and social stability to that area.”

1956 D (Adlai Stevenson)-

“The Democratic Party stands for the maintenance of peace in the Middle East, which is essential to the well-being and progress of all its peoples.

We urge **Israel and the Arab States to settle their differences by peaceful means, and to maintain the sanctity of the Holy Places in the Holy Land and permit free access to them.**

We will assist Israel to build a sound and viable economy for her people, so that she may fulfill her humanitarian mission of **providing shelter and sanctuary for her homeless Jewish refugees** while strengthening her national development.

The plight of the Arab refugees commands our continuing sympathy and concern. We will assist in carrying out large-scale projects for their resettlement in countries where there is room and opportunity for them.

We support the principles of free access to the Suez Canal under suitable international auspices....

The Democratic Party will act **to redress the dangerous imbalance of arms in the area** resulting from the shipment of Communist arms to Egypt, by selling or supplying defensive weapons to Israel, and **will take such steps, including security guarantees, as may be required to deter aggression and war in the area.**"

R (Dwight Eisenhower) –

"We recognize the existence of a major threat to international peace in the Near East. We support a policy of impartial friendship for the peoples of the Arab states and Israel to promote a peaceful settlement of the causes of tension in that area, including the human problem of the Palestine-Arab refugees.

Progress towards a just settlement of the tragic conflict between the Jewish State and the Arab nations in Palestine was upset by the Soviet Bloc sale of Arms to Arab countries. But prospects of peace have now been reinforced by the mission to Palestine of the UN Secretary General upon the initiative of the US.

We regard the preservation of Israel as an important tenet of American foreign policy. We are determined that the integrity of an independent Jewish State shall be maintained. We shall support the independence of Israel against armed aggression."

1960 - D (John Kennedy) –

"In the Middle East we will work for guarantees to insure independence for all states. We will encourage direct Arab-Israeli peace negotiations, the resettlement of Arab refugees in lands where there is room and opportunity for them, and end to boycotts and blockages, and unrestricted use of the Suez Canal by all nations....

We urge continued economic assistance to Israel and the Arab peoples to help them raise their living standards. We pledge our best efforts for peace in the Middle East by seeking to prevent an arms race while guarding against the dangers of a military imbalance resulting from Soviet arms shipments."

R (Richard Nixon)

"In the Middle East, we shall continue to support the integrity and independence of all states of that area including Israel and the Arab States.

With specific reference to Israel and the Arab Nations we urge them to undertake negotiations for a mutually acceptable settlement of the causes of tension between them. We pledge continued efforts:

To eliminate the obstacles to a lasting peace in the area, including the human problem of the Arab refugees. To seek an end to the transit and trade restrictions, blockades, and boycotts.

To secure freedom of navigation in international waterways, the cessation of discrimination against Americans on the basis of religious beliefs, and an end to the wasteful and dangerous arms race and to the threat of an arms imbalance in the area."

1964 D (Lyndon Johnson) –

“Work for the attainment of peace in the Near East as an urgent goal, using our best efforts to prevent a military unbalance, to encourage arms reductions and the use of national resources for internal development and to encourage the re-settlement of Arab refugees in lands where there is room and opportunity. The problems of political adjustment between Israel and the Arab countries can and must be peacefully resolved and the territorial integrity of every nation respected....

Encourage by all peaceful means the growing independence of the captive peoples living under Communism and hasten the day that Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Rumania and the other captive nations will achieve full freedom and self-determination. We deplore Communist oppression of Jews and other minorities.

In 1960, we urged B

...Continued economic assistance to Israel and the Arab peoples to help them raise their living standards. We pledge our best efforts for peace in the Middle East by seeking to prevent an arms race while guarding against the dangers of a military imbalance resulting from Soviet arms shipments.

In the period since that pledge was made the Middle East has come closer to peace and stability than at any time since World War II.

Economic and technical assistance to Israel and Arab nations continues at a high level, although with more and more emphasis on loans as against grants. The United States is determined to help bring the revolution in technology of desalinization to the aid of the desert regions of this area.”

R (Barry Goldwater) –

“We condemn the persecution of minorities, such as Jews, within Communist borders....

Respecting the Middle East, and in addition to our reaffirmed pledges of 1960 concerning this area, we will so direct our economic and military assistance as to help maintain stability in this region and prevent an imbalance of arms.”

1968 D (Hubert Humphrey) –

“The Middle East remains a powder keg. We must do all in our power to prevent a recurrence of war in this area. A large Soviet fleet has been deployed to the Mediterranean. Preferring short-term political advantage to long-range stability and peace, the Soviet Union has rushed arms to certain Arab states [Egypt and Syria] to replace those lost in the Arab-Israeli War of 1967. As long as Israel is threatened by hostile and well-armed neighbors, we will assist her with essential military equipment needed for her defense, including the most advanced types of combat aircraft.

Lasting peace in the Middle East depends upon agreed and secured frontiers, respect for the territorial integrity of all states. The guaranteed right of innocent passage through all international waterways, a humane resettlement of the Arab refugees, and the establishment of a non-provocative military balance. To achieve

these objectives, we support negotiations among the concerned parties. We strongly support efforts to achieve an agreement among states in the area and those states supplying arms to limit the flow of military equipment to the Middle East.

We support efforts to raise the living standards throughout the area, including desalinization and regional irrigation projects which cut across state frontiers....

We are profoundly concerned about the continued repression of Jews and other minorities in the Soviet Union and elsewhere, and look forward to the day when the full light of liberty and freedom shall be extended to all countries and all peoples.”

R (Richard Nixon) –

“In the tinderbox of the Middle East, **we will pursue a stable peace through recognition by all nations of a stable peace through recognition of all nations of each other=s right to assured boundaries, freedom of navigation through international waters, and independent existence free from the threat of aggression.** We will seek an end to the arms race through international agreement and the stationing of peace-keeping forces of the United Nations in areas of severe tension, as we encourage peace-table talks among adversaries....

Nor can we fail to condemn the Soviet Union for its continuing anti-Semitic actions, its efforts to eradicate all religions, and its oppression of minorities generally.”

1972 D (George McGovern) –

“In particular, the United States should, by diplomatic contacts, seek to mobilize world opinion to express concern at the denial of oppressed peoples of Eastern Europe, and the minorities of the Soviet Union, including the Soviet Jews, of the right to practice their religion and culture and to leave their respective countries....

The United States must be **unequivocally committed to support of Israel’s right to exist within secure and defensible boundaries. Progress toward a negotiated political settlement in the Middle East will permit Israel and her Arab neighbors to live at peace with each other, and to turn their energies to internal development.** It will also free the world from the threat of the explosion of Mid-East tensions into world war. In working toward a settlement, our continuing pledge to the security to security and freedom of Israel must be both clear and consistent. The next Democratic Administration should:

Make and carry out a firm, long-term public commitment to provide Israel with aircraft and other military equipment in the quantity and sophistication she needs to preserve her deterrent strength in the face of Soviet arming of Arab threats of renewed war;

Seek to bring the parties into direct negotiations toward a permanent political solution based on the necessity of agreement on secure and defensible boundaries;

Maintain a political commitment and a military force in Europe and at sea in the Mediterranean ample to deter the Soviet Union from putting unbearable pressure on Israel;

Recognize and support the established status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel with free access to all its holy places provided to all faiths. As a symbol of this stand, the U.S. Embassy should be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem; and

Recognize the responsibility of the world community for a just solution to the problems of Arab and Jewish refugees.”

R (Richard Nixon) –

“In the Middle East, we initiated arrangements leading to a cease-fire [in the War of Attrition] which has prevailed for two years. We pledge every effort to transform the cease-fire into lasting peace....

We are fully aware of and share the concern of many citizens for the plight of Soviet Jews with regard to their freedoms and emigration....

We support the right of Israel and its courageous people to survive and prosper in peace. We have sought a stable peace for the Middle East and helped to obtain a cease-fire which contained the tragic conflict. We will help in any way possible to bring Israel and the Arab states to the conference table, where they may negotiate a lasting peace. We will continue to act to prevent the development of a military imbalance which would imperil peace in the region and elsewhere by providing Israel with support essential for her security, including aircraft, training and modern and sophisticated military equipment, and also by helping friendly Arab

governments and peoples, including support for their efforts to diminish their dependence on outside powers. We support programs of **economic assistance to Israel** pursued by President Nixon that helped her achieve a nine per cent annual economic growth rate. This and the special refugee assistance ordered by the President have also helped to provide resettlement for the thousands of immigrants seeking refuge in Israel....

The irresponsible proposals of our political opposition to slash defense forces of the United States...would increase the threat of war in the Middle East and gravely menace Israel. We flatly reject these dangerous proposals.

With a settlement fair to all nations of the Middle East, there would be an opportunity for their peoples to look ahead to shared opportunities rather than backward to rancorous animosities. In a new environment of cooperation, Israel will be able to contribute much to economic renaissance in the Mid-East crossroads of the world.”

1976 D (Jimmy Carter) –

“We should continually remind the Soviet Union...of its commitments in Helsinki to the free flow of people and ideas and of how offensive we and other free people find its violations of UNDHR....

But we must let the world know that anti-American polemics are no substitute for sound policy and that the United Nations is weakened by harsh rhetoric from other countries or **by blasphemous resolutions such as the one equating Zionism and racism....**

We shall continue to seek a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. **The cornerstone of our policy is a firm commitment to the independence and security of the State of Israel. This special relationship does not prejudice improved relations with other nations in the region.** Real peace in the Middle East will permit Israel and her Arab neighbors to turn their energies to internal development, and will eliminate the threat of world conflict spreading from tensions there.

The Middle East conflict is complex, and a realistic, pragmatic approach is essential. Our policy must be based on firm adherence to these fundamental principles of Middle East policy:

We will continue our consistent support of Israel, including **sufficient military and economic assistance** to maintain Israel’s deterrent strength in the region, and the maintenance of U.S. military forces in the Mediterranean adequate to deter military intervention by the Soviet Union.

We steadfastly oppose any move to isolate Israel in the international arena or suspend it from the United Nations or its constituent organizations.

We will avoid efforts to impose on the region an externally devised formula for settlement, and will provide support initiatives toward settlement, based on direct face-to-face negotiation between the parties and normalization of relations and a full peace within secure and defensible boundaries.

We vigorously support the free passage of shipping in the Middle East B especially in the Suez Canal.

We recognize that the solution to the problems of Arab and Jewish refugees must be among the factors taken into account in the course of continued progress toward peace. Such problems cannot be solved, however, by recognition of terrorist groups which refuse to acknowledge their adversary’s right to exist, or groups which have no legitimate claim to represent the people for whom they purport to be speaking.

We support initiation of government enforcement action to insure that stated U.S. policy in opposition to boycotts against friendly countries is fully and vigorously implemented.

We recognize and support the established status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, with free access to all its holy places provided to all faiths. As a symbol of this stand, the U.S. Embassy should be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.”

R (Gerald Ford) –

“The preservation of peace and stability in the Middle East is a paramount concern. The efforts of the two Republican Administrations, summoning diplomatic and political skills, have been directed toward reduction of tension and toward avoiding flashpoints which could serve as an excuse for yet another round of conflict between Israel and the Arab countries.

Our commitment to Israel is fundamental and enduring. We have honored and will continue to honor that commitment in every way B politically, economically and providing the military aid that Israel requires to remain strong enough to deter any potential aggression. Forty percent of all United States aid that Israel has received since its creation in 1948 has come in the last two fiscal years, as a result of Republican initiatives. Our policy must remain one of decisive support for the security and integrity of Israel.

An equally important component of our commitment to Israel lies in continuing our commitment to Israel lies in continuing our efforts to secure a just and durable peace for all nations in that complex region. Our efforts have succeeded, for the first time since the creation of the state of Israel, in moving toward a negotiated peace settlement which would serve the interests and the security of all nations in the Middle East. Peace in the Middle East now requires face-to-face direct negotiations between the states involved with the recognition of safe, secure and defensible borders for Israel.

At the same time, Republican Administrations have succeeded in reestablishing communication with the Arab countries, and have made extensive progress in our diplomatic and commercial relations with the more moderate Arab nations....

Because we have such fundamental interest in the Middle East, it will be our policy to continue our efforts to maintain the balance of power in the Mediterranean region. Our adversaries must recognize that we will not permit a weakening of our defenses or any attempt to disturb valued Alliance relationships in the Eastern Mediterranean....

We shall expect the Soviet Union to implement the UNDHR and the Helsinki agreements, which guarantees conditions for the free interchange of information and the right to emigrate, including emigration of Soviet Jews, Christians, and Muslims and others who wish to join relatives abroad. In this spirit we shall expect the immediate end of all forms of imprisonment and military service, aimed at preventing such emigration.”

1980 D (Jimmy Carter) –

“Our...objective must be peace in Middle East. The Carter Administration has pursued this objective with determination and together with the leaders of Israel and Egypt, has overcome great obstacles in the last three years. **America made this commitment for two fundamental reasons B morality and national security.**

Our nation feels **a profound moral obligation to sustain and assure the security of Israel.** That is why our relationship with Israel, in most respects, a unique one. **Israel is the single democracy, the most stable government, the most strategic asset and our closest ally in the region.**

To fulfill this imperative, we must move towards peace in the Middle East. Without peace, there is a growing prospect, indeed inevitability, that this region will be radicalized, susceptible to foreign intrusion, and possibility involved in another war. Thus, peace in the Middle East also is vital for our national security interests.

The strength of these two impulses B our moral commitment and national security B has sustained the Democratic Administration in many difficult trials. The result has been the first peace ever between Israel and an Arab country, as well as the eventual prospect of a wider comprehensive agreement which will assure peace and security to all parties concerned. Our goal is to make the Middle East an area of stability and progress in which the United States can play a full and constructive role....

The Democratic Administration will also seek to reverse the sharp downturn in Soviet Jewish emigration and to obtain the release of dissidents now detained in the Soviet Union, including 41 members of the Helsinki Watch Groups who are in Soviet prisons, labor camps and banishment for their human rights activity. We will pursue our human rights concerns as a necessary part of overall progress on the range of political, military and economic issues between the United States and the Soviet Union—including the possibility of improved, mutually beneficial economic relations between our two countries.

Almost immediately after his inauguration, President Carter undertook to move the peace process forward. Following the historic visit of President Sadat to Jerusalem, the Administration's efforts led to Camp David, where the two presidents and Prime Minister Begin in thirteen days created the Camp David Accords—the most promising effort in three decades for creating a genuine and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Following President Carter's trip to the Middle East in March 1979, Prime Minister Begin and President Sadat signed the Israel-Egypt peace treaty at the White House. A year later, that treaty has led to the transfer of two-thirds of the Sinai to Egypt—along with the Sinai oil fields; ambassadors have been exchanged; borders have been opened; and normalization of relations is well underway. Israel has finally gained peace with its largest Arab neighbor. In sum, this Democratic Administration has done more to achieve Israel's dream of peace than any other Administration in thirty years.

Negotiations are continuing under the Camp David framework on full autonomy for the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza, in order to preserve fully Israel=s security while permitting the Palestinians living in the territories to participate in determining their own future. The United States is a full partner in negotiations between Israel and Egypt to provide a five-year transitional regime in the West Bank and Gaza.

It is recognized that the Democratic Administration has to proceed with special care and sensitivity resulting from its deep engagement in the delicate process of promoting a wider peace for Israel.

At the same time, the United States' commitment to the independence, security, and future of Israel has been strengthened. Nearly half of all U.S. aid to Israel since its creation as a sovereign state B more than \$10 billion B has been requested in the last three and a half years. We provide Israel with modern military equipment and we fully support Israel=s efforts to create a just and lasting peace with all of its Arab neighbors.

U.S. policy is B and should continue to be B guided also by the following principles:

UN Security Council Resolution 242, unchanged, and the Camp David Accords are the basis for peace in the Middle East.

We support Israel's security, and will continue to provide generous military and economic aid to that end.

We pledge not to provide Israel's potential enemies with sophisticated offensive equipment that could endanger the security of Israel.

Jerusalem should remain forever undivided, with free access to the holy places for people of all faiths. We oppose the creation of an independent Palestinian state.

We will not negotiate with or recognize the Palestinian liberation organization, unless it accepts Israel's right to exist and UNSC Resolutions 242 and 338. It is also long past time for an end to all terrorism and other acts of violence against Israel.

We have not and will not use our aid to Israel as a bargaining tool; and we will never permit oil policies to influence our policy towards peace or our support for Israel.

As stated in our 1976 platform, the Democratic Party recognizes and **supports "the established status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, with free access to all its holy places provided to all faiths. As a symbol of this stand, the U.S. Embassy should be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem..."**

We call upon all states in the region to support the historic efforts of Israel and Egypt to build a comprehensive peace.

We believe a cooperative effort among the nations of the Middle East and the United States can help provide the needed assistance to Israel and her Middle East neighbors engaging in the peace process with Israel in the vital areas of refugee resettlement, agricultural development, water development, health and medical facilities, and productivity and trade. A planning group should be created to pursue an effort to provide this type of assistance.

The Democratic Administration will also take needed measures to protect American interests in the Persian Gulf, including energy security, regional stability, and national independence. This will require sophisticated diplomacy as well as military capability. We will seek both to counter external threats and to encourage necessary political and economic development. In the end, our allies have an equal or greater interest than we in security of oil supply and regional stability, and the Democratic Administration will continue to cooperate with them in a common strategy and to share common burdens.

We condemn the government of Iran for its outrageous conduct in the taking of our diplomatic personnel as hostages....

In the regional as a whole, we must end our dangerous dependence of foreign oil. Only in this way can our foreign policy counter effectively the pressures of OPEC and of Soviet power poised above the Persian Gulf in Afghanistan.....As we reduce oil consumption and dependence on OPEC, we will be able to bargain on equal terms with the OPEC states for an assurance of more certain supplies of oil at more stable prices."

R (Ronald Reagan) –

“We affirm our commitment to press the Soviet Union to implement the UNDHR and the Helsinki Agreements which guarantee rights such as the free interchange of information and the right to emigrate. A Republican Administration will press the Soviet Union to end its harassment and imprisonment of those who speak in opposition to official policy, who seek to worship according to their religious beliefs, or who represent diverse ethnic minorities and nationalities.

Republicans deplore growing anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union and the mistreatment of “refuseniks” by Soviet authorities. The decline in exit visas to Soviet Jews and others seeking religious freedom and the promulgation of ever more rigorous conditions inhibiting their emigration is a fundamental affront to human rights and the U.N. Charter. Republicans will make the subject of emigration from the Soviet Union a central issue in Soviet-American relations. Human rights in the Soviet Union will not be ignored as it has been during the Carter Administration. As a party to the Helsinki Conference Final Act, a Republican Administration will insist on full Soviet compliance with the humanitarian provisions of the agreement....

In the past three years, the nations of the Middle East and Persian Gulf have suffered an unprecedented level of political, economic, and military turmoil. The Soviet Union has been prompt in turning these sources of instability of its advantage and is now in an excellent position to exploit the chaos in Iran and to foment similar upheavals in other countries in the region. Today, the countries of the Middle East and Persian Gulf are encircled as never before by Soviet advisors and troops based in the Horn of Africa, South Yemen, and Afghanistan. Moreover, the Soviets have close political and military ties with other states in the region.

The Soviet goal is clear B to use subversion and the threat of military intervention to establish a controlling influence over regions’ resource-rich states, and thereby to gain decisive political and economic leverage over Western and Third World nations vulnerable to economic coercion. The first signs of Soviet success in this undertaking are already evidenced in the recent proposal by European countries to associate the Palestinian Liberation Organization in the West Bank autonomy talks.

Republicans believe that the restoration of order and stability to the region must be premised upon an understanding of the interrelationship between Soviet and radical Palestinian goals, the fundamental requirements of stable economic development and marketing of the area’s resources, and the growing ferment among Islamic radical groups. Republicans believe that a wise and credible U.S. Policy must make clear that our foremost concern is for the long-term peaceful development of all states in the region, not purely a self-serving exploitation of its resources. **Our goal is to bring a just and lasting peace to the Arab-Israeli conflict.**

With respect to an ultimate peace settlement, **Republicans reject any call for involvement of the PLO as not in keeping with the long-term interests of either Israel or the Palestinian Arabs.** The imputation of legitimacy to organizations not yet willing to acknowledge the fundamental right to existence of the State of Israel is wrong. Repeated indications, even when subsequently denied, of the Carter Administration’s

involvement with the PLO have done serious harm to the credibility of U.S. policy in the Middle East and have encouraged the PLO's position of intransigence. **We believe the establishment of a Palestinian State on the West Bank would be destabilizing and harmful to the peace process.**

Our long- and short-term policies for the area must be developed in consultation with our NATO allies, Israel, Egypt, and other friends in the area, and we will spare no effort in seeking their consultation throughout the policy process, not merely demanding their acquiescence to our plans.

The sovereignty, security, and integrity of the State of Israel is a moral imperative and serves the strategic interests of the United States. Republicans reaffirm our fundamental and enduring commitment to this principle. We will continue to honor our nation's commitment through political, economic, diplomatic, and military aid. We fully recognize the strategic importance of Israel and the deterrent role of its armed forces in the Middle East and East-West military equations.

Republicans recognize that a just and durable peace for all nations of the region is the best guarantee of continued stability and is vital to deterring further Soviet inroads. Peace between Israel and its neighbors require direct negotiations among the states involved. Accordingly, a Republican Administration will encourage the peace process now in progress between Egypt and Israel, will seek to broaden it, and will welcome those Arab nations willing to live in peace with Israel. We are encouraged by the support given to the Middle East peace process by Sudan and Oman and the progress brought about by the strong and effective leadership of their governments.

We applaud the vision and the courage of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and we pledge to build our relationship with Egypt in cultural affairs, economic development, and military cooperation.

Republicans recognize that the Carter Administration's vacillations have left friend and foe alike unsure as to the United States policies. While reemphasizing our commitment of Israel, a Republican Administration will pursue close ties and friendship with moderate Arab states. We will initiate the economic and military framework for assuring long-term stability both in the internal development of regional states and orderly marketplace for the area's resources. We will make clear that any reimposition of an oil embargo would be viewed as a hostile act. We will oppose discriminatory practices, including boycotts, and will discourage arms sales which contribute to regional instability.

Republicans believe that Jerusalem should remain an undivided city with continued free and unimpeded access to all holy places by people of all faiths."

1984 D (Walter Mondale) –

“He [President Ronald Reagan] has had as many Middle East policies as he has had staff turnovers. First, he offered strategic cooperation to Israel as if it were a gift. Then he took it away to punish Israel as if it were not our ally. Then he pressured Israel to make one-sided concessions to Jordan. Then he demanded that Israel withdraw from Lebanon. Then he pleaded with them to stay. Then he did not accept their offer of medical help for our wounded Marines. He undercut American credibility throughout the Middle East by declaring Lebanon a vital interest of the United States and then withdrawing....

The Democratic Party condemns continued Soviet persecution of dissidents and refuseniks, which may well have brought Nobel laureate Andrei Sakharov and his wife to the verge of death in internal exile in Gorki. We will not be silent when Soviet actions, such as imprisonment of Anatoly Shcharansky and Ida Nudel and thousands of others, demonstrate the fundamentally repressive and anti-Semitic nature of the Soviet regime. A Democratic Administration will give priority to securing the freedom to emigrate for these brave men and women of conscience, including Jews and other minorities, and to assuring their fair treatment while awaiting permission to leave. These freedoms are guaranteed UNHCR and by the Helsinki Final Act which the Soviets have signed and with whose provisions they must be required to comply. Jewish emigration, which reached the level of fifty thousand per year during the last Democratic Administration and which has virtually ended under its Republican successor, must be renewed through firm, effective diplomacy. We also recognize that Jewish emigration reached its height at the same time there was an American Administration dedicated to pursuing arms control, expanding mutually beneficial trade, and reducing tensions with the Soviet Union B fully consistent with the interests of the United States and its allies. It is no contradiction to say that while pursuing an end to the arms race and reducing East-West tensions, we can also advance the cause of Soviet Jewish emigration....

The Democratic Party believes that the security of Israel and the pursuit of peace in the Middle East are fundamental priorities for American foreign policy. Israel remains more than a trusted friend, a steady ally, and a sister democracy. Israel is strategically important to the United States, and we must enter into meaningful strategic cooperation.

The Democratic Party opposes this Administration's sales of highly advanced weaponry to avowed enemies of Israel, such as AWACS aircraft to and Stinger missiles to Saudi Arabia. While helping to meet the legitimate defensive needs of states aligned with our nation, **we must ensure Israel's military edge over any combination of Middle East confrontation states. The Democratic Party opposes any consideration of negotiations with the PLO, unless to PLO abandons terrorism, recognizes the state of Israel, and adheres to U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338.**

Jerusalem should remain forever undivided with free access to the holy places for people of all faiths. As stated in the 1976 and 1980 platforms, the Democratic Party recognizes and supports the established status of Jerusalem as the

capital of Israel. As a symbol of this stand, the U.S. Embassy should be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

The Democratic Party condemns this Administration's failure to maintain a high-level Special Negotiator for the Middle East, and believes that the Camp David peace process must be taken up again with urgency. No nation in the Middle East can afford to wait until a new war brings even worse destruction. Once again we applaud and support the example of both Israel and Egypt in taking bold steps for peace. We believe that the United States should press for negotiations among Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and other Arab states. **We reemphasize the fundamental principle that the prerequisite for a lasting peace in the Middle East remains an Israel with secure and defensible borders, strong beyond a shadow of a doubt; that the basis for peace is the unequivocal recognition of Israel's right to exist by all other states, and that there should be a resolution of the Palestinian issue."**

R (Ronald Reagan) –

“We will press Soviet compliance with all international agreements, including the 1975 Helsinki Final Act and the UNDHR. We will continue to protest Soviet anti-Semitism and human rights violations. We admire the courage of such people as Andrei Sakharov, his wife Yelena Boner, Anatole Shcharansky, Ida Nudel and Josef Begun, whose defiance of Soviet repression stands as a testament to the greatness of the human spirit. We will press the Soviet Union to permit free emigration of Jews, Christians, and oppressed national minorities. Finally, because the peoples of the Soviet empire share our hope for the future, we will strengthen our information channels to encourage them in their struggle for individual freedom, national self-determination, and peace....

President Reagan’s Middle East policy has been flexible enough to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances, yet consistent and credible so that all nations recognize our determination to protect our vital interests....

Lebanon is still in turmoil, despite our best efforts to foster stability in that unhappy country. **With the Syrian leadership increasingly subject to Soviet influence, and the Palestinian Liberation Organization and its homicidal subsidiaries taking up residence in Syria, U.S. policy towards the region must remain vigilant and strong. Republicans reaffirm that the United States should not recognize or negotiate with the PLO so long as that organization continues to promote terrorism, rejects Israel’s right to exist, and refuses to accept U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338.**

The bedrock of that protection remains, as it has for over three decades, our moral and strategic relationship with Israel. We are allies in the defense of freedom. Israel’s strength, coupled with United States assistance, is the main obstacle to Soviet domination of the region. The Sovereignty, security, and integrity of the State of Israel are moral imperatives. We pledge to help maintain Israel’s qualitative military edge over its adversaries.

Today, relations between the United States and Israel are closer than ever before. Under President Reagan, we have moved beyond mere words to extensive political, military, and diplomatic cooperation. U.S. -Israel strategic planning groups are coordinating our joint defense efforts, and we are directly supporting projects to augment Israel’s defense industrial base. We support the legislation pending for an Israel-U.S. free trade area.

We recognize that attacks in the U.N. against Israel are thinly disguised attacks against the United States, for it is our shared ideals and democratic way of life that are their true target. Thus, when a U.N. agency denied Israel’s right to participate, we withheld our financial support until that action was corrected. And we have worked behind the scenes and in public in other international organization to defeat discriminatory attacks against our ally.

Our determination to participate actively in the peace process begun at Camp David has won us support over the past four years from moderate Arab states. Israel’s partner in Camp David Accords, Egypt, with American support, has been a constructive force for stability. We pledge continued support to Egypt and other moderate regimes

against Soviet and Libyan subversion, and **we look to them to contribute to our efforts for a long-term settlement of the region=s destructive disputes.**

We believe that Jerusalem should remain an undivided city with free and unimpeded access to all holy places by people of all faiths....

The Republican Party commends President Reagan for accepting the Honorary Chairmanship of the campaign to erect a U.S. Holocaust Memorial in Washington, D.C. and supports the efforts of the U.S. Holocaust Council in erecting such a museum and educational center. The museum will bear witness to the victims and survivors of the Holocaust.”

1988 D (Michael Dukakis) –

“Deeply disturbed that the current Administration has too long abandoned the peace process in the Middle East and consistently undermined it in Central America, we believe that this country, maintaining the special relationship with Israel founded upon mutually shared values and strategic interests, should provide new leadership to deliver the promise of peace and security through negotiations that has been held out to Israel and its neighbors by the Camp David Accords.”

R (George Bush) –

“We call on the Soviet government to release political prisoners, allow free emigration for “refuseniks” and others, and introduce full religious tolerance. Soviet Jews, Christians, Armenians, and other ethnic and religious groups are systematically persecuted, denied the right to emigrate, and prevented from freely practicing their religious beliefs. The situation is intolerable, and Republicans demand an end to all of these discriminatory practices....

The foundation of our policy in the Middle East has been and must remain the promotion of a stable and lasting peace, recognizing our moral and strategic relationship with Israel. More than any of its predecessors, the Reagan-Bush Administration solidified this partnership. As a result, the relations between the United States and Israel are closer than ever before.

We will continue to maintain Israel’s qualitative advantage over any adversary or coalition of adversaries.

We will continue to solidify our strategic relationship with Israel by taking additional concrete steps to further institutionalize the partnership. This will include adequate levels of security and economic assistance; continuing our meetings on military, political and economic cooperation and coordination; prepositioning military equipment; developing joint contingency plans; and increasing joint naval and air exercises. The growth of the Soviet military presence in the Eastern Mediterranean and along NATO’s southern flank has demonstrated the importance of developing and expanding the U.S.-Israel strategic relationship.

We oppose the creation of an independent Palestinian state; its establishment is inimical to the security interests of Israel, Jordan and the U.S. We will not support the creation of any Palestinian entity that could place Israel’s security in jeopardy.

Republicans will build upon the efforts of the Reagan-Bush Administration and work for peace between Israel and her Arab neighbors based upon the following principles:

A just and lasting peace is essential, urgent, and can be reaching only through direct negotiations between Israel and the Arab nations.

Peace treaties must be reached through direct negotiations and must never be imposed upon willing partners.

The PLO should have no role in the peace process unless it recognizes Israel's right to exist, accepts UNSC resolutions 242 and 338, renounces terrorism, and removes language from its charter demanding Israel's destruction.

Under Republican leadership, the United States will explore every opportunity to move forward the peace process toward direct negotiations as long as the security of Israel is not compromised. **Much work remains to establish a climate in the Middle East where the legitimate rights of all parties, including the Palestinians, can be equitably addressed.**

We recognize that Israel votes with the United States at the United Nations more frequently than any other nation. **The Reagan-Bush Administration supported legislation mandating that if the U.N. and its agencies were to deny Israel's right to participate, the United States would withhold financial support and withdraw from those bodies until their actions are rectified. The Republican Party reaffirms its support for the rescission of U.N. Resolution 3379, which equate Zionism with racism. Failure to repeal that resolution will justify attenuation of our support for the U.N.**

We believe that Jerusalem should remain an undivided city, with free and unimpeded access to all holy places by peoples of all faiths.

Republicans see Egypt as a catalyst in the Arab world for advancing the cause of regional peace and security. For this reason, we believe that the United States has a significant stake in Egypt's continuing economic development and growth. As the only Arab nation to have formally made peace with Israel, it is reaping the benefits. Egypt's support of the Camp David Accords demonstrates that an Arab nation can make peace with Israel, be an ally of the United States, and remain in good standing in the Arab world. Republicans support the Reagan-Bush Administration's formal designation of Egypt as a major non-NATO ally."

1992 Bill Clinton) –

“Support the peace process now under way in the Middle East, rooted in the tradition of the Camp David Accords. Direct negotiations between Israel, her Arab neighbors and Palestinians, with no imposed solutions, are the only way to achieve enduring security for Israel and full peace for all parties in the region. The end of the Cold War does not alter America’s deep interest in our longstanding special relationship with Israel, based on shared values, a mutual commitment to democracy, and a strategic alliance that benefits both nations. The United States must act effectively as an honest broker in the peace process. It must not, as has been the case with this Administration, encourage one side to believe that it will deliver unilateral concessions from the other. Jerusalem is the capital of the state of Israel and should remain an undivided city accessible to peoples of all faiths.”

R (George Bush) –

“In the Middle East, prospects for peace have been transformed by the determined statesmanship of George Bush. Without the leadership of President Bush, Iraq would today threaten world peace, the peace and security of the Middle East, and the very survival of Israel with a huge conventional army and nuclear weapons. Direct peace talks, on terms Israel rightly had sought for more than four decades, would not be a reality. Soviet Jewish emigration likely would have been interrupted. The rescue of Ethiopian Jewry might not have happened. And the equation of Zionism to racism still would be a grotesque stain on the United Nations.

Although much has changed for the better. The Middle East remains an area of high tensions B many unrelated to Arab-Israeli conflict B where regional conflicts can escalate to threaten the vital interests of the United States. As Saddam Hussein’s aggression against Kuwait demonstrated, heavily armed radical regimes are capable of independent aggressive action. **In this environment, Israel’s demonstrated strategic importance to the United States, as our most reliable and capable ally in this part of the world, is more important than ever. This strategic relationship, with its unique moral dimension, explains the understandable support Israel receives from millions of Americans who participate in our political process. The strong ties between the U.S. and Israel were demonstrated during the Gulf War when Israel chose not to retaliate against repeated missile attacks, even though they caused severe damage and loss of life. We will continue to broaden and deepen the strategic relationship with our ally Israel B the only true democracy in the Middle East B by taking additional concrete steps to further institutionalize the partnership. This will include maintaining adequate levels of security and economic assistance; continuing our meetings on military, political and economic assistance; continuing our meetings on military, political and economic cooperation and coordination; prepositioning military equipment; developing joint contingency plans; and increasing joint naval and air exercises.**

Consistent with our strategic relationship, the United States should continue to provide large-scale security assistance to Israel, maintaining Israel’s qualitative

advantage over any adversary or coalition of adversaries. We will also continue to negotiate with the major arms supplying nations to reach an agreement on limiting arms sales to the Middle East and preventing the proliferation of non-conventional weapons.

We applaud the President's leadership in fostering unprecedented direct talks between Israel and its Arab neighbors. The United States is prepared to use its good offices to mediate disputes at their request. **We do not believe the U.S. should attempt to impose a solution on the parties.**

The basis for negotiations must be UNSC Resolutions 242 and 338. Peace must come from direct negotiations. It will be up to the negotiators to determine exactly what is required to satisfy these resolutions, but we firmly believe Israel has a right to exist in secure and recognized borders. As President Bush stated in Madrid, our objective is not simply to end the state of war; rather, it is to establish real peace, one with treaties, security, diplomatic relations, trade investment, cultural exchange, even tourism. We want the Middle East to become a place where people lead normal lives.

A meaningful peace must assure Israel's security while recognizing the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. We oppose the creation of an independent Palestinian state. Nor will we support the creation of any political entity that would jeopardize Israel's security. As Israelis and Palestinians negotiate interim self-government, no party will be required to commit itself to any specific final outcome of direct negotiations. Israel should not be forced to negotiate with any party. In this regard, the United States will have no dialogue until it satisfies in full the conditions laid out by President Bush in 1990. **We believe**

Jerusalem should remain an undivided city, with free and unimpeded access to all holy places by people of all faiths. No genuine peace would deny Jews the right to live anywhere in the special city of Jerusalem.

Peace in the Middle East entails cooperation between all the parties in the region. To this end, we have worked to bring all of the states of area together with Israel to hold multilateral negotiations on issues of common concern such as regional development, water, refugees, arms control and the environment. We support these forums as a means of encouraging Arab acceptance of Israel and solving common regional problems.

We continue to back legislation mandating that if the U.N. and its agencies were to deny Israel's right to participate, the United States would withhold financial support and withdraw from those bodies until their action was rectified.

Republicans believe freedom of emigration is a fundamental human right and that Jews from any nation should be free to travel to Israel. Republicans are proud we have maintained our historic and moral commitment to the resettlement in Israel of persecuted Jews. **We congratulate President Bush and Secretary [of State James] Baker on the agreement with Israel for a generous package of loan guarantees that will provide new immigrants with needed humanitarian assistance.**

We also should maintain our close ties with and generous aid for Egypt, which properly reaps the benefits of its courageous peace with Israel. We continue to support Egypt and other pro-Western states in the region against subversion and aggression and call for an end to the Arab boycott of Israel....

We will not permit the Soviet nuclear nightmare to be replaced by another one. Outlaw nations -- North Korea, Iran, Iraq, Libya, and others -- lust for weapons of mass destruction. This is the nightmare of proliferation: nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons that together with ballistic missiles, can deliver death across whole continents, including our own."

1996 D (Bill Clinton) –

"President Clinton has overseen a remarkable record of achievement toward peace and security in the Middle East B the Israeli-Palestinian accords; the peace agreement between Israel and Jordan; new regional security and investment summits; Israel's increased acceptance throughout the Middle East and the world; the dual containment of Iraq and Iran. The Democratic Party is committed to help build on this record, knowing that peace and security are indivisible, and supports the efforts by the Clinton-Gore Administration to achieve a comprehensive and lasting peace among Israel and all its neighbors, including Lebanon and Syria. The Democratic Party remains committed to America's long-standing special relationship with Israel, based on shared values, a mutual commitment to democracy and a strategic alliance that benefits both nations. The United States should continue to help Israel maintain its qualitative edge. Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and should remain an undivided city accessible to people of all faiths. We are also committed to working with our Arab partners for peace to build a brighter, more secure and prosperous future for all the people of the Middle East. To that end, we seek to further and enhance our close ties with states and peoples in the Arab and Islamic world committed to non-aggression and willing to take risks for peace."

R (Bob Dole) –

"The Middle East remains a region vital to American security. Our enduring goals there are to promote freedom and stability, secure access to oil resources, and maintain the security of Israel, our one democratic ally in the region with whom we share moral bonds and common strategic interests. Most of the world's oil exports flow from the Middle East, and thus its strategic significance remains. But it is still the most volatile region in the world. Islamic radicalism, increasing terrorism, and rogue states like Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Libya threaten regional international stability.

In this environment, Israel's demonstrated strategic importance to the U.S. as our most reliable capable ally in this part of the world is more critical than ever. That is why Israel's security is central to U.S. interests in the region. That is why Republican Administrations initiated efforts with Israel to pre-position military equipment, to conduct joint contingency planning and joint military exercise. That is why we advocate continuing cooperation on the Arrow Missile, boost phase intercept, and the Nautilus programs. That is why we look toward the greater integration of Israel into our regional defense planning and wish to explore ways to enhance our strategic cooperation. That is why we have continued to support our full funding for aid to Israel despite cuts in the foreign assistance budget, and why we applaud the country's commitment toward economic self-sufficiency.

We reaffirm that Republican commitment to maintain Israel's qualitative military advantage over any adversary or group of adversaries. While we fully support Israel's efforts to find peace and security with its neighbors, we will judge the peace process by security it generates both for Israel for the United States. In that context, we support Israel's right to make its own decisions regarding security and boundaries. We strongly oppose the Clinton Administration's attempts to interfere in Israel's democratic process.

We applaud the Republican Congress for enacting legislation to recognize Jerusalem as the undivided capital of Israel. A Republican administration will ensure that the U.S. Embassy is moved to Jerusalem by May, 1999.

We honor the memory of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, and express our support for the new government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. We applaud those leaders in the Arab world, President Mubarak and King Hussein, who have spoken courageously and acted boldly for the cause of peace. We endorse continued assistance and support for countries which have made peace with Israel - led by Egypt and later joined by Jordan. Republican leadership will support others who follow their example, while isolating terrorist states until they are fit to rejoin the community of nations."

2000 D (Al Gore)

"Al Gore and the Democratic Party are fundamentally committed to the security of our ally, Israel, and the creation of a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace between Israel and its neighbors. We helped broker the Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty, the Wye River accords, and the Sharm el-Sheik Memorandum, and will continue to work with all parties to make progress towards peace. Our special relationship with Israel is based on the unshakable foundation of shared values and a mutual commitment to democracy, and we will ensure that under all circumstances, Israel retains the qualitative military edge for its national security. Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and should remain an undivided city accessible to people of all faiths. In view of the government of Israel's courageous decision to withdraw from Lebanon, we believe special responsibility now resides with Syria to make a contribution toward peace. The recently-held Camp David summit, while failing to bridge all the gaps between Israel and the Palestinians, demonstrated President Clinton's resolve to do all the United States could do to bring an end to that long conflict. Al Gore, as president, will demonstrate the same resolve. We call on both parties to avoid unilateral actions, such as a unilateral declaration of Palestinian statehood, that will prejudice the outcome of negotiations, and we urge the parties to adhere to their joint pledge to resolve all differences only by good faith negotiations....

In light of the possibility that U.S. Forces or our allies will have to contend with hostile tactical range ballistic missiles, we have been working rapidly to develop anti-tactical ballistic missile systems. We are working successfully with Israel on developing and deploying the Arrow anti-tactical ballistic missile system and the Tactical High Energy Laser.....

In the Middle East, we are promoting regional trade, particularly among Israel, Jordan, and Egypt. We must continue our work to reach out to moderate Arab states and we must intensify our effort to foster closer ties to the Islamic World.”

R (George W. Bush)

“In the Middle East, the advancement of U.S. national interests requires clear and consistent priorities as well as close cooperation with America’s friends and allies. We have four priorities for the Middle East. First, we seek to promote and maintain peace throughout the region. Second, we must ensure that Israel remains safe and secure. Third, we must protect our economic interests and ensure the reliable flow of oil from the Persian Gulf. And fourth, we must reduce the threat of weapons of mass destruction in the region. Because America cannot achieve these objectives by acting alone, U.S. policy must rest on leadership that can build strong coalitions of like-minded states and hold them together to achieve common aims.

As American influence declined during the current administration, the OPEC cartel drove up the price of oil. Anti-Americanism among the Arab people redoubled. Iran continued to sponsor international terrorism, oppose the Arab-Israeli peace process, and pursue nuclear, biological, chemical, and missile capabilities with extensive foreign assistance. America’s closest allies expanded their political and economic relations with Iran. A Republican president will work to reverse these damaging trends.

It is important for the United States to support and honor Israel, the only true democracy in the Middle East. We will ensure that Israel maintains a qualitative edge in defensive technology over any potential adversaries. We will not pick sides in Israeli elections. The United States has a moral and legal obligation to maintain its Embassy and Ambassador in Jerusalem. Immediately upon taking office, the next Republican president will begin the process of moving the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Israel’s capital, Jerusalem.

The United States seeks a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. America can use its prestige to encourage discussions and negotiations. But peace must be negotiated between the parties themselves. We will not impose our view or an artificial timetable. At the heart of the peace process is the commitment to resolve all issues through negotiation. A unilateral declaration of independence by the Palestinians would be a violation of that commitment. A new Republican administration would oppose any such declaration. It will also do everything possible to promote the conclusion of a genuine peace in the Middle East. While we have hopes for the peace process, our commitment to the security of Israel is an overriding moral and strategic concern....

Republicans endorse continued assistance and support for countries that have made peace with Israel — led by Egypt and Jordan. We appreciate the significant contributions by Jordan to our common struggle against terrorism, and will take steps to

bolster relations with Amman including negotiating a U.S.-Jordan Free Trade Agreement.

The next Republican administration will use its diplomatic influence to put an end to a pattern of discrimination that persists at the United Nations in denying committee assignments to Israel. It will do the likewise at the International Red Cross which refuses to accredit the symbol of Magen David Adom, Israel's equivalent of the Red Cross."

2004 D (John Kerry)

"The Democratic Party is fundamentally committed to the security of our ally Israel and the creation of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace between Israel and her neighbors. Our special relationship with Israel is based on the unshakable foundation of shared values and a mutual commitment to democracy, and we will ensure that under all circumstances, Israel retains the qualitative edge for its national security and its right to self-defense. Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and should remain an undivided city accessible to people of all faiths. Under a Democratic Administration, the United States will demonstrate the kind of resolve to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that President Clinton showed. We will work to transform the Palestinian Authority by promoting new and responsible leadership, committed to fighting terror and promoting democracy. We support the creation of a democratic Palestinian state dedicated to living in peace and security side by side with the Jewish State of Israel. The creation of a Palestinian state should resolve the issue of Palestinian refugees by allowing them to settle there, rather than in Israel. Furthermore, all understand that it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949. And we understand that all final status negotiations must be mutually agreed. "

R (George W. Bush)

We applaud President Bush and the Republican Congress for working to end the unacceptable discrimination against Israel at the United Nations, by that institution's denying committee assignments to Israel. We welcome Israel's membership in the Western European and Others Group at the United Nations headquarters and urge its full acceptance at other United Nations venues. We support adoption of bipartisan legislation to withhold the annual headquarters contribution made by the U.S. Department of State to the International Committee of the Red Cross if Magen David Adom is not given the opportunity to participate fully in the activities of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement....

Republicans endorse continued assistance and support for countries that have made peace with Israel – led by Egypt and Jordan. We applaud the actions of President Bush and the Republican Congress to provide both nations with new grants and loan

guarantees to promote economic reform measures.....

The Republican Party shares President Bush's commitment to the security of America's democratic ally Israel and the safety of the Israeli people. We remain committed to ensuring that Israel maintains a qualitative edge in defensive technology over any potential adversaries.

We believe that terror attacks against Israelis are part of the same evil as the September 11, 2001, attacks against America. We recognize Israel's right to defend itself in the face of homicide bombings and other attacks against the people of Israel.

We are very concerned about the escalation of anti-Semitic violence worldwide, including in Europe. This violence has included physical assaults, use of weapons, arson of synagogues, and desecration of Jewish cemeteries and statues. We are proud of President Bush's outspoken condemnation of anti-Semitism. We share his conviction that anti-Semitism poisons public debates within democratic nations and that mankind must come together to fight such dark impulses.

We support President Bush's vision of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. However, as he observed in his remarks of June 24, 2002, for such a vision to become a reality, Palestinians need a new leadership, not compromised by terror. Like all other people, Palestinians deserve a government that serves their interests and listens to their voices. If Palestinians embrace democracy and the rule of law, confront corruption, and firmly reject terror, they can count on American support for the creation of a Palestinian state. The Bush Administration has been clear about the obligations of Arab nations in achieving peace in the Middle East.

Republicans agree with President Bush that Israel's plan to remove all settlements from Gaza and several settlements from the West Bank is a courageous step toward peace in the face of continuing terrorist violence. This initiative can stimulate progress toward peace as laid out in the Road Map launched by President Bush. Republicans commend the government of Israel for its desire to pursue peace, even in the face of continuing terrorist attacks. This is demonstrated by steps Israel has taken, such as removing unauthorized outposts and improving the humanitarian situation by easing restrictions on the movement of Palestinians not engaged in terrorist activities.

Republicans agree with President Bush's assessment that an agreed, just, fair, and realistic framework for a solution to the Palestinian refugee issue, as part of any final status agreement, will need to be found through the establishment of a Palestinian state and the settling of Palestinian refugees there, rather than in Israel. We also share the President's view that as part of a final peace settlement, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949. All previous efforts to negotiate a two-state solution have reached the same conclusion. It is realistic to expect that any final status agreement will only be achieved on the basis of mutually agreed changes that reflect these realities. **Republicans continue to support moving the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Israel's capital, Jerusalem.**

Sources: Compiled by the author. Highlighting is for emphasis of key points at author's discretion.

Copies of the Complete Platforms can be found at the American Presidency Project,

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/platforms.php>

Note: Extraneous material has been cut above and some minor phrases have been replaced by abbreviations such as US, UN, UNGA, UNSC, UNHCR.

**Key phrases on the nature of the U.S.-Israel Relationship as excerpted
from Democratic and Republic political platforms, 1948-2004**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>
1948	"recognition of Israel"	"full recognition"
1952	"continued assistance"	"friendly interest"
1956	"selling or supply defensive weapons to Israel, and will take such steps, including security guarantees, as may be required"	"We regard the preservation of Israel as an important tenet of American foreign policy"
1960	"insure independence for all states"	"integrity and independence of all states"
1964	"territorial integrity of every nation respected"	"maintain stability in this region"
1968	"We will assist her [Israel] with essential military equipment needed for her defense"	"We will pursue a stable peace through recognition by all nations of a stable peace through recognition of all nations of each other's right to assured boundaries"
1972	"unequivocally committed to support Israel's right to exist"	"We support the right of Israel and its courageous people to survive and prosper in peace"
1976	"The cornerstone of our policy is a firm commitment to the independence and security of the State of Israel."	"Our commitment to Israel is fundamental and enduring"
1980	"Our nation feels a profound moral obligation to sustain and assure the security of Israel. That is why our relationship with Israel, in most respects, a unique one. Israel is the single democracy, the most stable government, the most strategic asset and our closest ally in the region. "	"The sovereignty, security, and integrity of the State of Israel is a moral imperative and serves the strategic interests of the United States. Republicans reaffirm our fundamental and enduring commitment to this principle"
1984	"The Democratic Party believes that the security of Israel and the pursuit of peace in the Middle East are fundamental priorities for American foreign policy. Israel remains more than a trusted friend, a steady ally and a sister democracy."	"The bedrock of that protection remains, as it has for over three decades, our moral and strategic relationship with Israel. We are allies in the defense of freedom... The sovereignty, security, and integrity of the State of Israel are moral imperatives."
1988	"We believe that this country, maintaining the special relationship with Israel founded upon mutually shared values and strategic interests"	"The foundation of our policy in the Middle East has been and must remain the promotion of a stable and lasting peace, recognizing our moral and strategic relationship with Israel."
1992	"The end of the Cold War does not alter America's deep interest in our longstanding special relationship with Israel, based on shared values, a mutual commitment to democracy, and a strategic alliance that benefits both nations."	"In this environment, Israel's demonstrated strategic importance to the United States, as our most reliable and capable ally in this part of the world, is more important than ever. This strategic relationship, with its unique moral dimension, explains the understandable support Israel receives from millions of Americans who participate in our political process. "
1996	"The Democratic Party remains committed to America's long-standing special relationship with Israel, based on shared values, a mutual commitment to democracy and a strategic alliance that benefits both nations."	"...maintain the security of Israel, our one democratic ally in the region with whom we share moral bonds and common strategic interests. "
2000	"....fundamentally committed to the security of our ally, Israel....Our special relationship with Israel is based on the unshakable foundation of shared values and a mutual commitment to democracy...."	"...we must ensure that Israel remains safe and secure.... It is important for the United States to support and honor Israel, the only true democracy in the Middle East."
2004	"The Democratic Party is fundamentally committed to the security of our ally Israel....Our special relationship with Israel is based on the unshakable foundation of shared values and a mutual commitment to democracy, and we will ensure that under all circumstances, Israel retains the qualitative edge for its national security and its right to self-defense."	"The Republican Party shares President Bush's commitment to the security of America's democratic ally Israel and the safety of the Israeli people. We remain committed to ensuring that Israel maintains a qualitative edge in defensive technology over any potential adversaries."

Appendix G: Statistical Analysis of U.S. House Voting Record by State

State	State Average	2004 2-Party Pres Vote	Total Seats	% Dems in House	Orthodox to Reform	2001 Jewish Population	Total State Population	Jewish % of State Population
WA	23.5	53.6%	9	67%	27.8%	43,000	5,908,000	0.73%
OR	22.8	52.1%	5	80%	66.7%	32,000	3,429,000	0.93%
MA	20.3	54.6%	10	100%	70.7%	275,000	6,357,000	4.33%
MN	20.1	51.8%	8	50%	50.0%	42,000	4,931,000	0.85%
MI	18.2	51.7%	15	40%	26.1%	110,000	9,952,000	1.11%
WI	15.7	50.2%	8	50%	40.0%	28,000	5,372,000	0.52%
CA	14.0	55.0%	52	63%	78.8%	999,000	34,000,000	2.94%
OH	10.9	48.9%	18	33%	48.5%	149,000	11,360,000	1.31%
IL	8.2	55.2%	19	53%	68.3%	270,000	12,436,000	2.17%
NC	7.4	43.8%	13	46%	5.9%	26,500	8,077,000	0.33%
MD	3.9	56.6%	8	75%	138.9%	213,000	5,311,000	4.01%
MS	1.8	40.5%	4	50%	0.0%	1,500	2,849,000	0.05%
LA	1.5	42.7%	7	29%	25.0%	16,000	4,470,000	0.36%
PA	0.1	51.3%	19	37%	50.0%	282,000	12,283,000	2.30%
KS	0.1	37.1%	4	25%	33.3%	14,000	2,692,000	0.52%
MO	(0.4)	46.4%	9	44%	35.7%	62,500	5,603,000	1.12%
CT	(1.5)	55.3%	5	40%	90.9%	111,000	3,410,000	3.26%
TX	(2.2)	38.5%	32	34%	23.1%	131,000	20,947,000	0.63%
SC	(3.6)	41.4%	6	33%	11.1%	11,500	4,023,000	0.29%
VA	(4.3)	45.9%	11	27%	23.8%	66,000	7,104,000	0.93%
AR	(4.5)	45.1%	4	75%	0.0%	1,700	2,678,000	0.06%
AZ	(6.5)	44.7%	8	25%	40.0%	81,500	5,165,000	1.58%
KY	(6.7)	40.0%	6	17%	16.7%	11,500	4,047,000	0.28%
CO	(8.7)	47.6%	7	43%	50.0%	73,000	4,323,000	1.69%
IN	(9.0)	39.6%	9	22%	17.6%	17,500	6,090,000	0.29%
IA	(9.9)	49.7%	5	20%	12.5%	6,100	2,928,000	0.21%
NY	(10.0)	59.3%	29	69%	193.9%	1,657,000	18,990,000	8.73%
AL	(10.4)	37.1%	7	29%	11.1%	9,000	4,451,000	0.20%
NJ	(12.0)	53.4%	12	50%	125.0%	485,000	8,429,000	5.75%
GA	(13.0)	41.6%	13	46%	41.2%	93,500	8,230,000	1.14%
OK	(15.1)	34.4%	5	20%	0.0%	5,000	3,453,000	0.14%
FL	(18.9)	47.5%	25	28%	64.9%	620,000	16,054,000	3.86%
TN	(22.5)	42.8%	9	56%	75.0%	18,000	5,702,000	0.32%

Analysis based on Congressional voting records in the 108th (2003-2005) and 109th (2005-2007) Congresses in the U.S. House of Representatives. This chart only includes the 33

largest states with 4 or more members of the U.S. House. A high average in the 2nd column is indicative of support for policies that are supportive of Middle East peace, while a low average is indicative of support for policies that support AIPAC's policies that generally delay progress towards the peace process.

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